

THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN ADVERTISING

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ABSTRACT:

The study is focused on the development of advertising in the context of social changes in the US. Its main goal is to point out how advertising reacted to some historical events and important social, economic, political or cultural changes in the US. The study is based on the concept of four crucial moments in the advertising history stated by Holm. He speaks about four phases in the general development of advertising: 1. origins, industrialisation and development, 2. professionalization, consolidation and redemption, 3. manipulation, creativity and globalisation, 4. digital advertising, algorithms and 'dataveillance'. In this study, the attention is paid to the first phase; however, it is applied to the US historical development and cultural environment. Therefore, the first part of the text points out the nature of advertising from the colonization to the American Revolution; the second and much more extensive part of the study focuses on significant events of the 19th century, which crucially influenced and changed the history of the US, i.e. the Industrial Revolution and the Civil War. Those historical events also affected the ways of promotion; advertising mirrored the situation in society remarkably. The study's conclusion explains the necessity of regulation and the need for the professional approach towards advertising at the turn of the 20th century.

KEY WORDS:

the 19th century advertising, development, the history of advertising, social changes, the United States of America

Introduction

The general history of advertising is a large part of the history of commerce. People have been exchanging goods and services for thousands of years – even old civilisations, e.g. Phoenicians or Babylonians developed trade and distribution routes. The famous trade route known as the 'Silk Road' stretched from China to the Mediterranean Sea. According to some authors and historians, one of the oldest forms of advertising appeared as commercial and political messages painted on the walls located in places with heavy traffic.

However, when speaking about advertising as it is known nowadays – given the functions it has and purposes it fulfils today¹ – we can state that advertising is a product of modern times and modern media. As O'Guinn, Allen and Semenik claim, there are four crucial factors that gave rise to advertising; it came into being

¹ See, for example: MIKULÁŠ, P., SVĚTLÍK, J.: Execution of Advertising and Celebrity Endorsement. In *Communication Today*, 2016, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 92-103; MINÁR, P.: Goodvertising as a Paradigmatic Change in Contemporary Advertising and Corporate Strategy. In *Communication Today*, 2016, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 4-17.



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as a result of, firstly, the rise of capitalism, secondly, the Industrial Revolution, thirdly, manufacturers' pursuit of power in the channels of distribution and finally, the rise of modern mass media.² The communications historian Norris also shares this opinion, claiming that *"the idea of advertising does not make sense in societies where economic relations were based around gift-giving, feudal redistribution and self-sufficiency"*.³ As is evident, it is not possible to determine the exact 'birth date' of advertising. Historians, scholars and even advertising professionals differ in their views which events or what time could be regarded as the beginning of advertising.

The first attempts to 'advertise' may be marked as some kind of pre-advertising forms. Undoubtedly, these first expressions of advertising communication (e.g. different signs, symbols, product displays, town criers or barkers) play a very important role in the overall development of advertising and marketing communication.

In this study, the attention is focused on the beginnings of advertising communication in the US, especially on the intersections between the social, economic and political state of society and the development of advertising. Following Holm, four key moments in the history of advertising can be defined:

1. origins, industrialisation and development,
2. professionalization, consolidation and redemption,
3. manipulation, creativity and globalisation,
4. digital advertising, algorithms and 'dataveillance'.⁴

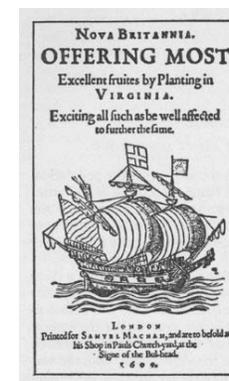
In this study, we primarily reflect on the first phase defined by Holm: *origins, industrialisation and development*, applying it to American conditions, i.e. within the country's social development. The article aims to provide explanations of the reasons that led to the beginning of the second phase in the history of advertising in the US: *professionalization, consolidation and redemption*.

From the Colonial Times to the Revolution: The Rise of Advertising in America

The origins of advertising communication in America date back to the 17th century, so it is certainly adequate to begin with Sivulka's statement: *"The efforts by English entrepreneurs to attract new settlers to America was one of the first concerted and sustained advertising campaigns in the history of the modern world."*⁵ Atwan, Orton and Vesterman also add that *"throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, enterprising Englishmen printed a variety of books, brochures, and posters to promote America to their countrymen"*.⁶

There were many different reasons why people decided to leave their homes and start their new lives in the New World. Religious, political or economic problems were amongst the most important reasons for doing so. They were promised a great life in a land of marvels or the 'Garden of Eden' – a place where nothing was impossible. Productive land, precious metals as gold and silver, fountains of youth, untold amounts of fish and game. Dreams and hopes of all potential new settlers; however, they were very far from reality.

The goal of all the promotions in that time was to attract investors and settlers to the New World. Picture 1 portrays an example of such promotion. The pamphlet was published by *Virginia Company* in 1609. It offered an investment opportunity in its colonial enterprise, the coastal town of Jamestown, which was the first American settlement.⁷



Picture 1: Promotion of the New World

Source: *An English Ad Promoting Migration to America, 1609*. [online]. [2018-09-18]. Available at: <<http://muse.jhu.edu/article/377516>>.

By 1730, thirteen British colonies were established on the Atlantic seaboard with different economic activities. The northern colonies were mainly focused on farming, in the southern colonies plantations were developed, so a large number of Africans were 'imported' to America against their will; the slaveholding estate system was established there. Middle Atlantic colonies focused more on trading and merchant shipping. European colonists brought the idea of advertising with them to America, but it was very difficult to apply it for many reasons.

As Sivulka claims, the colonial American economy looked different than the British economy; early America had rural character, it was an undeveloped land. Most of the nation's households made a living from farms and if they had a small surplus, the farmers found buyers in the village marketplace or they bartered it for other goods or services.⁸ Moreover, workers did not earn much money, because employers provided them with room and food in exchange for their labour. So as it seems, colonists did not need to advertise their goods and services for sale. Moreover, the English government restricted the usage of the printing press in order to limit any criticism or spreading of inappropriate ideas. This information can be proved with the following statement written by King James II and addressed to Sir Edmund Andros, the Governor of Massachusetts. It contained a very strict set of instructions regarding the press:

*"Given that, in our province, freedom of the press may lead towards great anxieties, we expect You to give all necessary orders binding anybody not to OWN a printing machine or to PRINT a book, a pamphlet or any other press release unless Your special authorization is given and prior permission is granted."*⁹

In spite of this, the first printing press was brought to America in 1639. The main aim was to share Puritan theology and some classical writings. Decades later, in April 1704, the Boston postmaster John Campbell founded *The Boston News-Letter*, which was the first regularly printed newspaper in America. It was being published for 72 years till 1776, according to Vojtek.¹⁰ What is considered to be important is that the first known paid advertisement was published in the third issue of this newspaper (see Picture 2). It was seeking a buyer for a plantation at Oyster Bay (Long Island, New York).

2 O'GUINN, T. C., ALLEN, CH. T., SEMENIK, R. J.: *Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion*. Mason : South-Western Cengage Learning, 2009, p. 77.

3 NORRIS, V.: Advertising History: According to the Textbook. In *Journal of Advertising*, 1980, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 3.

4 HOLM, N.: *Advertising and Consumer Society*. London : Palgrave, 2017, p. 15-34.

5 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston : Wadsworth, 2012, p. 6.

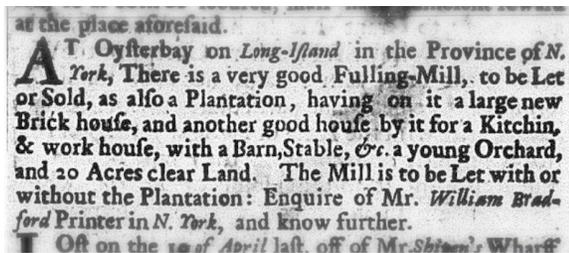
6 ATWAN, R., ORTON, B., VESTERMAN, W.: *American Mass Media: Industries and Issues*. New York : Random House, 1986, p. 34.

7 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston : Wadsworth, 2012, p. 7.

8 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston : Wadsworth, 2012, p. 7-8.

9 VOJTEK, J.: Dejiny amerického novinárstva v periodickej tlači. In VOJTEK, J. (ed.), JENČA, I., HOLEŠŤIAK, P., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Dejiny svetových novinárstiev (anglického a amerického)*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2010, p. 174. The author's translation is based on the original source: SLOAN, W., WILLIAMS, J. H.: *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. USA : Praeger, 1994.

10 VOJTEK, J.: Dejiny amerického novinárstva v periodickej tlači. In VOJTEK, J. (ed.), JENČA, I., HOLEŠŤIAK, P., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Dejiny svetových novinárstiev (anglického a amerického)*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2010, p. 175.



Picture 2: America's First Paid Advertisement
 Source: *The Oyster Bay Property: America's First Paid Ad.* [online]. [2018-09-18]. Available at: <<https://www.visceralconcepts.com/the-oyster-bay-property-americas-first-paid-ad/>>.

Gradually, advertising was taking off on the American colonies. Very important was *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which many scholars consider to be the best American newspaper of the colonial era. It was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1728 and it became a very successful news and advertising source.¹¹ Franklin changed the advertising style to attract more readers and advertisers.

Colonial advertising was mainly concentrated on land, various goods, transportation, as well as on searching for runaways. A considerable percentage of advertisements consisted of short notices selling slaves (see Picture 3). Millions of Africans were kidnapped or purchased and transported to the colonies. They were treated as products, as unanimated objects. Mostly, the slaves were not advertised by name, which is another dehumanising aspect of slavery. Advertisements offered "a likely young Negro Fellow" or "a remarkable smart healthy Negro Wench" to be sold. Those advertisements contained descriptions of what kind of work the slaves could do or information about their health. An example of this type of advertisements was published in the above-mentioned *The Boston News-Letter* on 21st March 1734:

"A Likely Negro Man about Twenty two Years of Age, speaks good English, has had the Smallpox and the Measles, has been seven Years with a LIME BURNER: To be sold, Inquire of John Langdon, Baker, next Door to John Clark's at the North End, Boston."¹²

A big number of advertisements focused on runaways. Their descriptions were very detailed to increase the chances of identifying and capturing the slaves on the run. Newspapers were full of such advertisements:



Pictures 3, 4: Examples of Slavery Advertising
 Source: *Missing Chapter: African Americans in Hudson Valley.* [online]. [2018-09-18]. Available at: <<https://hudsonvalleyblog.wordpress.com/2012/04/15/missing-chapter-african-americans-in-hudson-valley/>>; *An Advertisement for a Slave Auction in Charleston, South Carolina.* [online]. [2018-09-18]. Available at: <<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-transatlantic-slave-trade/sources/323>>.

11 VOJTEK, J.: Dejiny amerického novinárstva v periodickej tlači. In VOJTEK, J. (ed.), JENČA, I., HOLEŠŤIAK, P., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Dejiny svetových novinárstiev (anglického a amerického)*. Trnava: FMK UCM, 2010, p. 177-178.
 12 TEAM OF AUTHORS: Eighteenth Century Slaves as Advertised by Their Masters. In *The Journal of Negro History*, 1916, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 194.

The colonial people paid attention mainly to local news and advertising, because those matters influenced them most. They were not interested in foreign matters so much. They usually came together and read loudly announcements about the arrivals of new shipments or other important news. The economic activity began to rise; the number of merchants and shopkeepers increased accordingly. In the 1760s, England imposed new regulations and taxes (e.g. the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act) to have more control over the colonies and their economy. Those new rules caused a lot of boycotts and demonstrations; moreover, the colonies began to cooperate and organise themselves. Eventually, in 1775, the fight for independence began.

The given major social events amplified the demand for news about the Revolution. People were immensely interested in the events' development and everyone wanted to be well-informed. Newspaper circulation increased rapidly; on the other hand, this caused sudden lack of paper. At that time paper was made exclusively of rags that were difficult to obtain. The paper shortage often limited many important city newspapers to publishing only 300 to 400 copies per day, while other publishers had to suspend printing.¹³

To solve this problem, the font size was reduced, more type was crammed into less space in order to save it and what is important, advertising was limited to abbreviated announcements. Of course, advertisers were disappointed that they could not publish their creative advertisements in the newspapers. They began to use so-called *broad-sides*, which were large sheets of paper printed one side only, typically twice the size of a newspaper page. They provided enough space for all information which was needed to share. In the time of the Revolution, broadsides did not contain only advertisements but also official declarations, political propaganda, dying confessions of convicted criminals and even poetic verses.¹⁴

Generally, the press and newspapers played a very important role in the fight for independence. As Vojtek emphasises, they helped unify and keep the colonies together. Undoubtedly, they contributed not only to the success of the Revolution but also to the true birth of the American nation.¹⁵

The 19th Century in America: The Crucial Changes and Key Social Events

After the US became independent, American citizens soon expressed their desire for self-sufficiency. People preferred buying goods produced in the US and they avoided foreign products, especially those made in Britain. This tendency strengthened particularly after the War of 1812. The American economy had local or regional nature in that time. Most products were manufactured at home or locally (in the same town). Similarly to the colonial period, advertising was focused mainly on three key areas: slaves and runaways, land¹⁶ and transportation. The most widespread communication means were still flyers, posters and newspaper advertisements.¹⁷

Gradually, different changes started to occur in the American society, which significantly influenced not only the nature of the US economy but also changed the people's lifestyle greatly. Of course, these changes had effect on advertising, too, especially in terms of brand-building and use of communication means (media); they encouraged the emergence of the first advertising agents and later, advertising agencies.

13 MEGGS, P. B., PURVIS, A. W.: *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006, p. 112.
 14 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2012, p. 13.
 15 VOJTEK, J.: Dejiny amerického novinárstva v periodickej tlači. In VOJTEK, J. (ed.), JENČA, I., HOLEŠŤIAK, P., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Dejiny svetových novinárstiev (anglického a amerického)*. Trnava: FMK UCM, 2010, p. 184.
 16 This kind of advertising continued to exist throughout the whole 19th century, and mostly because of the Homestead Act adopted in 1862 (remark by the author).
 17 TELLIS, G. J.: *Reklama a podpora prodeje*. Praha: Grada, 2000, p. 30-32.

The Industrial Era Begins

Near the end of 18th century, the economy of the United States slowly began to flourish. The main reason was the gradual (sequential) transformation of the country from the agrarian era to the industrial era. This is confirmed also by O'Brien and Szeman who claim that this process of industrialisation can be defined as "the movement within a culture or economic system toward an increased emphasis on large-scale/mechanized industry rather than agricultural/small-scale commercial activity".¹⁸ This phenomenon is known as the Industrial Revolution, referring to "a period of massive economic, technological, social and cultural change which affected humans to such an extent that it's often compared to the change from hunter-gathering to farming".¹⁹ As it is mentioned above, the key point of this change was to transform the agrarian world's economy based on manual labour into one built upon the industrial imperatives and machine-powered mass production.

The Industrial Revolution still proceeds even in these days; it is adequately changing and modifying according to the development and direction of the society. For example, Minár claims that "we are living through times of fascinating and revolutionary changes".²⁰ He follows Schwab, the founder and executive director of the World Economic Forum, who speaks about four industrial revolutions: "the first profound shift in our way of living – the transition from foraging to farming – happened around 10,000 years ago. This agrarian revolution was followed by a series of industrial revolutions that began in the second half of the 18th century."²¹ The first industrial revolution lasted from 1760 to around 1840. Spurred by the construction of railroads and the invention of the steam engine, it ushered in mechanical production. The second industrial revolution started in the late 19th century and into the early 20th century; mass production changed the life of people, now fostered by electricity and assembly lines. The third industrial revolution came in the 1960s. It is often called the computer or digital revolution because it was accelerated by the emergence of semiconductors and mainframe computing (the 1960s), personal computing (the 1970s and 1980s) and the Internet (the 1990s). Finally, the fourth industrial revolution began at the turn of the new Millennium, building on the digital revolution. It is determined by much more omnipresent and mobile forms of Internet communication, by smaller and more powerful sensors that have become cheaper, and by artificial intelligence and machine learning.²²

Following this division, mainly the first industrial revolution and partially the second industrial revolution are taken into consideration in this study. Referring to the US, the key 'milestone' came near the end of the 18th century, as it has already been mentioned. The year 1789 is possible to mark as the beginning of the American Industrial Revolution; back then, an English mechanic named Samuel Slater brought the Industrial Revolution to USA. According to O'Callaghan, as it was against the law to take plans of the machines outside England, Slater was forced to learn the details of the cotton spinning machines by heart. After arriving to the US, he opened a factory to spin cotton at Rhode Island. As the author adds, "the success of Slater's cotton mill began a process of change in the United States. In time that process turned the northeast of the nation into its first important manufacturing region".²³

Development, Innovations, Changes

One step at a time, technological, transport-related and communication innovations brought new opportunities to simplify production, develop business strategies or open new markets. Amongst the most important industrial improvements from these times, which affected mainly the manufacturing processes, were, for example: the cotton gin invented by Eli Whitey, the sewing machine, the steam power, the steel plough and many other inventions.

18 O'BRIEN, S., SZEMAN, I.: *Popular Culture: A User's Guide*. Scarborough : Thomson Nelson, 2017, p. 319.

19 WILDE, R.: *A Beginner's Guide to the Industrial Revolution*. Released on 13th July 2018. [online]. [2018-09-17]. Available at: <<https://www.thoughtco.com/guide-to-the-industrial-revolution-1221914>>.

20 MINÁR, P.: Incumbent vs. Newcomer Different Strategies for the Current Disruptive Changes. In BEZÁKOVÁ, Z., ČÁBYOVÁ, E., PETRANOVÁ, D. (eds.): *Marketing Identity: Online Rules – Part II. Conference Proceedings*. Trnava: FMK UCM, 2017, p. 359.

21 SCHWAB, K.: *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2017, p. 6-7.

22 SCHWAB, K.: *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2017, p. 6-7.

23 O'CALLAGHAN, B.: *An Illustrated History of the USA*. Essex: Longman, 2004, p. 38.

The Industrial Revolution also brought crucial changes in the society. Big factories were built, finance system became more advanced and "for the first time, it cost people less to buy a product than to make it themselves, and customer demand was increasing".²⁴ The development of new means of transport (postal routes, waterways, canals, roads and railways in particular) and new means of communication (photographs and cameras, telegraphs, typewriters and later telephones) speeded the exchange of information amongst people as well as communication associated with establishing business relations. The population increased rapidly; moreover, people's literacy rose, they were more educated. These and other factors created conditions for the later emergence of a mass market.

These facts had, of course, a significant influence on the press. Unsurprisingly, demand for newspapers and magazines increased gradually. Many new, modern magazines appeared. In addition, photography and the ability to print detailed illustrations offered journalists and advertisers new opportunities how to tell a story or promote products. According to Nye, in 1833 there were about 1200 newspapers in the USA (comparing with the year 1775, when only 37 newspapers existed).²⁵ The big turnover was introduction of the penny press. The designation "penny" indicates that such newspapers were much cheaper than elite newspaper titles. Therefore, they were more accessible to the general public. Many scholars are convinced that the first successful penny paper was *New York Sun* established by Benjamin Day in 1833. The accessibility of this newspaper for the masses was also expressed by its subtitle: *It shines for ALL*. The paper's news content was different to better correspond with the interests and preferences of this new target group – it offered less politics and more popular topics. However, the reason why this newspaper was so important was that its primary source of income was advertising (or selling the media space), not subscription earnings as it had been before.²⁶ These facts led to the origin of a new occupation of an advertising agent, and the very first advertising agencies were established.

The First Advertising Agencies

Advertising as a profession did not exist until the middle of the 19th century. Advertising was predominantly on the local level, placed in local media – magazines and newspapers, so advertisers did not need any further assistance or help. They managed all issues related to publishing advertisements directly through communication with print media and their editors. Later, the railroad network was improved so manufactured goods could be sent to even the most remote areas. This affected the advertising process considerably: the creation, execution and implementation of advertising were now more complicated because there were greater distances to overcome. The expansion of newspaper circulation needs to be mentioned as well; in 1850, circulation of dailies was estimated at 1 million copies per day and newspapers doubled their advertising volumes.²⁷ The newspapers thus began paying agents to sell space to advertisers, what led to the emergence of a new kind of media business – advertising agency. As Tungate claims, it is generally accepted that the first advertising agency in the US was established in Philadelphia in 1842 or 1843 by Volney B. Palmer. Of course, it was not an advertising agency in the true sense of the word and it did not offer the same services as those existing today. However, in 1849, the term "advertising agency" was used for the first time in the agency's own advertisement.²⁸ Palmer's work is further described by Twitchell: "Volney B. Palmer sent letters to postmasters to be forwarded on to local newspapers offering to buy space sight unseen each week for an extended period of time. He then made the promise that has profoundly affected each new medium since. He would pay cash up front. Palmer then marked up the cost of that space and sold it to the client."²⁹ Some periodicals paid him a part of their revenue, which was usually 25 per cent, when he persuaded

24 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2012, p. 14.

25 NYE, R.: *Society and Culture in America, 1830-1860*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1989, p. 366.

26 VOJTEK, J.: Dejiny amerického novinárstva v periodickej tlači. In VOJTEK, J. (ed.), JENČA, I., HOLEŠTIK, P., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Dejiny svetových novinárstiev (anglického a amerického)*. Trnava: FMK UCM, 2010, p. 193.

27 O'GUINN, T. C., ALLEN, CH. T., SEMENIK, R. J.: *Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion*. Mason: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2009, p. 80.

28 TUNGATE, M.: *Adland: A Global History of Advertising*. London: Kogan Page, 2013, p. 14.

29 TWITCHELL, J. B.: *Adcult USA*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 68.

any company to buy the media space in the newspapers or in the magazines.³⁰ As Fox points out, he acted as an agent for the media, not for the advertisers.³¹ Of course, today, buying and selling the media (advertising) space is not the key business of advertising agencies; it is media agencies' domain now. However, this was the first step towards how advertising agents and advertising agencies eventually came into being. As Fox states, by the beginning of the Civil War, there existed about thirty such agencies, from which more than half were located in New York. The more advanced advertising agencies performing activities similar to nowadays began originating in the last quarter of the 19th century, when advertising became 'a full-fledged industry'.³²

Mass Production, Mass Market, Mass Consumption

As it is obvious, this period of time could be characterised as an era of major changes, great breakthroughs and formation of the mass market. The origin of the mass market was exactly what created all the necessary presumptions for the emerging era of modern marketing. The distribution and promotion became important parts of the trading processes; the main goal was, of course, to sell mass-produced products and services to customers and reach profit.

Undoubtedly, this period of American history is equal to the first stage in Holm's historical division of advertising mentioned above (*origins, industrialisation and development*). To prove it, he adds four significant cultural shifts through which that era could be characterised. The first feature is urbanisation, i.e. the growth of large factories that offered many employment possibilities available in urban centres, causing migration of people from rural areas to cities. Next point is rationalisation; a new way of organising space and time began to appear, putting emphasis on efficiency and separation. This new regime separated workplaces from the places where people lived. Clocks and calendars substituted the sun and seasons. Of course, the preconditions for the origin and existence of mass production and mass distribution began to emerge (these were further developed at the beginning of the 20th century). New inventions allowed for the mass-manufacturing of goods. More products on the market resulted in quick formation of strong competition. New distribution channels enabled to find previously unknown ways of identifying new markets and communicating with new customers. And last, but not least important feature of this era is the onset of mass media, especially the transformation of newspapers into a true mass medium.³³

All these changes and factors resulted in the birth of consumer society, which is "*historically unique form of society in which consumption plays an important, if not central, role. Central to consumerism is the (generally implicit) belief that the organization of life around the purchase of commodities is the optimal way to address the needs and wants of individuals, and even to allocate social goods*".³⁴ Simply said, the industrial revolution allowed products to be available to all in vast quantities for the first time in history. This unlimited access led to the start of the mass consumption era;³⁵ of course, the most significant development of the mass production, consumption and consumer way of life came at the beginning of the 20th century.

Based on the above-mentioned facts, the basic impulses for the development of American advertising were continuity in technological inventions and experience brought from Europe, independence from England leading to the birth of national economy (since American people refused to buy goods produced in England), railways connecting the West to the East that simplified the distribution of goods, the population growth (immigration) and emergence of new means of communication, which brought not only significant simplification of communication but also market expansions and increase in the population's incomes.³⁶

The American Civil War

The moral debates centred on slavery, remarkable cultural differences and tensions in the country, which caused division of the nation into 'two Americas', resulted in one of the worst armed conflicts in American history. As McPherson states, the Civil War (1861-1865) is the central event in America's historical consciousness. While the Revolution had created the United States, this war determined what kind of nation America would be. That is the reason why it is often marked as the defining event in American national history. According to the author, "*the war resolved two fundamental questions left unresolved by the Revolution: whether the United States was to be a dissolvable confederation of sovereign states or an indivisible nation with a sovereign national government; and whether this nation, born of a declaration that all men were created with an equal right to liberty, would continue to exist as the largest slaveholding country in the world*".³⁷ As it is known, this conflict was the most expensive war ever fought on American soil with the highest number of the killed and injured. This fact is also confirmed by the United States Information Agency that states: "*a war had begun in which more Americans would die than in any other conflict before or since*".³⁸

The Civil War had a great impact on various areas of life. It brought numerous consequences and effects in the political, economic, social as well as cultural sphere of life. The Civil War caused immense changes on the American market, the advertising world being no exception. Firstly, sudden demand for a big amount of military material or uniforms stimulated the mass production of industrial goods. Secondly, the men's service in the army led to the fact that women had to do their work instead; for example, women worked in the fields or in factories, managing the family's money and making most of their purchases. Now it was women who purchased goods and did the shopping more often than ever before. In those times women became customers and they were responsible for deciding what and how much to buy. Their disgust at shopping goods, which had been home-made before, gradually decreased. American households began to buy products such as bread, soaps, biscuits and also clothes.³⁹ Ready-made clothing slowly but surely became a common thing. The textile industry also began to develop, mostly because of the urgent need for a big amount of uniforms and other clothes necessary for soldiers. Sewing machines were brought into wider use; in the 1850s, Isaac Merritt Singer improved the original invention of sewing machine and made it financially available for many American households. It was heavily advertised and with the end of the Civil War the textile industry became more accepted by the general public; people got used to clothes made in factories. After the War, shopping became an ordinary activity, for some people even pleasure; and that is why the first department stores appeared.

Another interesting fact is that during the Civil War, the first national advertising campaign was introduced. The federal government enlisted an advertising agent to help sell war bonds and promoted the issue in more than five thousand publications.⁴⁰ There were also posters (see Pictures 5 and 6) which sought recruits and army volunteers. The target group of these posters were "young, able-bodied men". The posters contained rallying cries calling to the battle, for example: "On the Washington!", "Down with the Rebellion!", "Cavalry! To the Field!" or "War! War! War!" and they really tried to motivate and persuade men to join the army through claims such as: "Your Country Calls, 'Tis Duty to Obey!", "Aid Your Country!", "To Arms, to Arms, Your Country Calls!", "Come to the Rescue of Our Glorious Republic!" It is interesting to see how the texts on posters emphasised the affiliation to one of the two hostile parties – The Union or The Confederacy. Most of those recruiting posters contained direct appeals or other exclamations expressing the support for one of the hostile sides, for instance: "Men of the South, Rally! Freemen of Tennessee! Kentuckians! The Union Forever! The Union, It Must and Shall Be Preserved!" The production of a big number of war posters and people's interest in the war news also improved the publishing processes, brought new methods of illustration, more advanced printing techniques and innovations in paper-making technology.

30 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston : Wadsworth, 2012, p. 32-33.

31 FOX, S.: *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators*. Champaign : University of Illinois Press, 1997, p. 14.

32 FOX, S.: *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators*. Champaign : University of Illinois Press, 1997, p. 19.

33 HOLM, N.: *Advertising and Consumer Society*. London : Palgrave, 2017, p. 17-18.

34 O'BRIEN, S., SZEMAN, I.: *Popular Culture: A User's Guide*. Scarborough : Thomson Nelson, 2017, p. 313.

35 *History of American Consumerism*. [online]. [2018-09-18]. Available at: <<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~kelle20m/class-web/wp/page2.html>>.

36 HORŇÁK, P.: *Reklama. Teoreticko-historické aspekty reklamy a marketingovej komunikácie*. Zlín : VeRBuM, 2018, p. 171.

37 McPHERSON, J.: *A Defining Time in Our Nation's History*. [online]. [2018-09-20]. Available at: <<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/brief-overview-american-civil-war>>.

38 UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY: *An Outline of American History*. USA : United States Information Agency, 1994, p. 163.

39 For more information, see: TELLIS, G. J.: *Reklama a podpora prodeje*. Praha : Grada, 2000, p. 32; SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston : Wadsworth, 2012, p. 26.

40 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston : Wadsworth, 2012, p. 24.



Pictures 5, 6: Recruiting Campaigns

Source: Recruiting Campaign Posters. [online]. [2018-09-18]. Available at: <<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ba/0e/ba/ba0eba892627447bf83d6c6f58f7db.jpg>>, <<https://i.pinimg.com/236x/a3/bb/ac/a3bbac348030f46af5205a43a79243c--history-posters-union-army.jpg>>.

The Phenomenon of Patent Medicine

The Civil War took lives of more than 600,000 people; however, the biggest killer was not the War itself, but various diseases such as malaria, pneumonia or dysentery. Bad conditions the soldiers had to face and malnutrition they experienced also contributed to the spread of them. Army doctors used different substances to treat the wounded; some contained highly addictive compounds including a big percentage of alcohol or other (similarly malicious and addictive) substances. After the War, many men suffered from various illnesses or encountered different long-term health consequences, so they kept taking these medicines. This was also one of the reasons why patent medicines became even more popular in those times. Another fact was that America's inhabitants did not have any other choice. The westward migration caused that most new settlers lived in doctorless territories so the demand for this kind of products rose.⁴¹

Originally, patent medicines designated medications whose ingredients had been granted the government protection for exclusivity. However, the recipes of most 19th century patent medicines were not officially patented. Most producers, often small family businesses, used ingredients quite similar to those used by their competitors – vegetable extracts laced with large doses of alcohol.⁴² As it is seen, this term is mostly connected to the US history and especially to the second half of the 19th century because it is “often used to refer to a product (such as an elixir, tonic, or liniment) that was marketed as a medicine in the U.S. during the 1800s and early 1900s but was typically of unproven effectiveness and questionable safety.”⁴³

As we have mentioned above, most concoctions were fortified with substances as morphine, opium or cocaine. Unfortunately, many of these mixtures were intended for infants and children specifically. Their use often led to tragic consequences. Moreover, such remedies were available for treating almost any kind of sickness. These medicaments were openly sold to the public and claimed “to cure or prevent nearly every ailment known to man”, including venereal diseases, tuberculosis, colic in infants, indigestion or dyspepsia,

41 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2012, p. 34-35.

42 *History of Patent Medicine*. [online]. [2018-09-01]. Available at: <<https://www.hagley.org/research/digital-exhibits/history-patent-medicine>>.

43 *Definition of Patent Medicines*. [online]. [2018-09-05]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patent%20medicine>>.

and even cancer. The “female complaints” were often the target of such products, offering hope for women to find relief from monthly discomforts.⁴⁴ However, as Fox claims, “patent medicines in most cases were neither patented nor medicinal.”⁴⁵

Advertising reacted immediately to the demand. The promises of “instant relief” or “immediate help” (Picture 7) and information on “miraculous elixirs” occurred in most magazines and newspapers, but some of them denied promoting such dubious products, so the producers had to find other ways of presenting them. Besides printed announcements, they began to use outdoor advertising or painted messages. The language used in those means of advertising was unrealistic, promising things impossible to reach. This exaggeration and self-praise in marketing communication is called “puffery”, or rather “an advertising or sales presentation relying on exaggerations, opinions, and superlatives, with little or no credible evidence to support its vague claims.”⁴⁶



Picture 7: Instant Relief Reached by Patent Medicines

Source: Patent Medicines: Cocaine-Laced Toothache Remedy Ad Targeted for Children-1885. [online]. [2018-09-18]. Available at: <<http://www.colorantshistory.org/PatentMedicines.html>>.

Of course, these unethical methods of promotion contributed to ‘bad image’ of advertising as a whole. As Tuncate adds, “the excesses and outright lies of patent medicine advertising were thus generative of a lack of trust or respect and contributed to the persistent public perception that advertising was barely an honest trade, let alone a profession.”⁴⁷ According to Fox, “to the public, advertising and patent medicines were linked in an association that only harmed the reputations of both.”⁴⁸

On the other hand, here it is possible to see the strength of advertising. As Presbrey states, by 1900, total sales of patent medicines in the US reached 75 million dollars. Many people were persuaded by the ‘overblown’ rhetoric and vague claims and so they bought products which did not offer any benefits; moreover, some of them had damaging effects on health.⁴⁹

What is interesting, however, is that the well-known soft drink, Coca Cola, one of the world-famous brands, was ‘born’ as such a product and was marketed as a remedy for exhaustion and headache. This effect was achieved because it contained a dose of cocaine. Later, this compound was substituted by caffeine.⁵⁰ In 1886, John S. Pemberton, a pharmacist from Atlanta, made flavoured syrup which was mixed with carbonated water. Later the brand named *Coca-Cola* was established, referring to ‘coca’, i.e. one of the used ingredients, as well as the characteristic font called Spencerian script which is used even today.

44 *History of Patent Medicine*. [online]. [2018-09-01]. Available at: <<https://www.hagley.org/research/digital-exhibits/history-patent-medicine>>.

45 FOX, S.: *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1997, p. 16.

46 *Definition of Puffery*. [online]. [2018-09-05]. Available at: <<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/puffery.html>>.

47 TUNGATE, M.: *Adland: A Global History of Advertising*. London: Kogan Page, 2013, p. 30.

48 FOX, S.: *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1997, p. 16.

49 PRESBREY, F. S.: *The History and Development of Advertising*. New York: Doubleday, 1929, p. 16.

50 PENDERGRAST, M.: *For God, Country and Coca-Cola*. New York: Basic Book, 2000, p. 8-10.

Conclusion: The End of the 19th Century and Changes in Advertising

In the beginning of the 20th century, advertising began to seek higher levels of professionalization and regulation. Professionalization of advertising was a natural consequence of the situation in the society – as the mass production began and the origins of consumerism were born, advertising began to gain in importance. It was used, studied and developed constantly. Moreover, the practice of branding products became the norm. Advertising was driven by the necessity to sell a wide supply of mass-produced goods and by demands of a growing urban population seeking its identity through branded products. Earlier, advertising had had no sense, since customers had visited general stores and had bought, for example, one slice of soap from a large, locally produced cake. With the development of manufactured goods and establishment of specialised companies, advertising's ability to create imaginary differences between near-identical soaps (or other products for that matter) began to emerge rapidly. Advertising suddenly took a prominent place in early consumer culture, turning unmarked commodities into social symbols and identity markers. Already at that time consumers were willing to pay more money for brands than for unmarked commodities, although the products themselves were maybe identical. This we can prove with the example of the very popular soap Ivory manufactured by Procter & Gamble Co. and a generic soap wrapped in the plain paper.⁵¹ Brands and branding became increasingly important. Competition on the market became stronger. All manufacturers and companies felt the necessity to distinguish themselves from competitive products by memorable brand names, attractive packaging and trademarks. Amongst the most recognised brand names of those days were the above-mentioned Ivory Soap, Sapolio Soap and Royal Baking Powder. Such packaged, brand-name household goods as soaps, cereals, baking ingredients, foodstuffs became the first nationally advertised products.⁵² Moreover, the first slogans appeared – *Absolutely Pure* (Royal Baking Powder), *It floats* (Ivory Soap, P&G Company), *Do You Know Uneeda Biscuits?* (National Biscuit Company) or *You Press the Button, We Do the Rest* (Kodak camera) are some of the most memorable slogans from the end of the 19th century. In those times, many new companies and brands were established. Nobody expected that some of them would enter the human history as the biggest and strongest companies ever built. *Coca Cola, Kodak, Johnson & Johnson, Lipton, Pepsi Cola or Goodyear* are only a few of them. There are other well-known brands which originated in the 1800s; for instance, *Procter & Gamble* or *Levi's*.

On the other hand, the misleading and “*unregulated promise-the-moon advertising*”⁵³ (e.g. the techniques used by P. T. Barnum)⁵⁴ and the promotion strategies related to patent medicines contributed to the increasing need for legal regulation and better control of advertising. Trying to avoid the chaotic and often outright deceptive practices of patent medicine advertising, some of the key players in the industry began to call for greater professionalism and solemnity in their practice in order to distinguish themselves from carnival barkers, snake-oil salesmen, and such celebrated promoters of “ballyhoo” and “humbug” as P. T. Barnum.⁵⁵

Moreover, as Fox states, advertising did not possess a very positive image in the 19th century: „*Advertising was considered as embarrassment – the retarded child, the wastrel relative, the unruly servant kept backstairs and never allowed into the front parlour. A firm risk its credit rating by advertising; banks might take it as confession of financial weakness. Everyone deplored advertising. Nobody – advertiser, agent,*

or medium – took responsibility for it. The advertiser only prepared the ad, but did not place it; the agent only served as an errand boy, passing the advertiser's message along to the publisher; the medium printed it, but surely would not question the right of free speech by making a judgement on the veracity of the advertiser.”⁵⁶

These problems resulted in the necessity of greater control of advertising. And as media became more dependent on advertisers, advertising companies themselves lobbied for something far more subtle and important – control over the content.⁵⁷ This led to the emergence of full service advertising agencies. It also means that such an agency did not only sell and buy media space but also provided a wider range of services such as creative (artistic) ways of presentation and copywriting. The main point was to take control over the content of their advertising. In that time, advertising became more professionalized. As advertising agencies broadened their services, the processes of planning, creating and placing advertising campaigns became crucial parts their work, and advertising thus acquired its current form. National, later global advertising agencies were established.⁵⁸ New York became the world centre of advertising as the major agencies (N. W. Ayer & Son, J. Walter Thomson, George Batten Co., later BBDO, Bates Agency) built their offices there. N. W. Ayer & Sons Agency was one of the largest agencies famous for launching an advertising campaign for the Uneeda Biscuit ordered by National Biscuit Company.

In connection with that, a new advertising style emerged, in which realism and rationality dominated: prose was simple, claims were accurate and imagery was tasteful and relevant. The goal was to inform the public rationally and realistically about the consumer choices available to them. The other thing was a shift in perception of advertising; from understanding it as a form of art to understanding it as a form of science which included psychological and statistical approaches. Moreover, market research began to gain importance.⁵⁹

To conclude it all, taking into consideration Holm's four essential moments in advertising history,⁶⁰ the last decades of the 19th century brought the second moment in advertising (*professionalization, consolidation and redemption*). The industry began to organise itself, calling for professionalism and legitimacy. The first attempts to regulate advertising were urged and supported by the advertisers themselves. At the beginning of the 20th century, acceptable practices, norms and codes of ethics were established. In 1906, the Pure Food and Drug Act was passed, which required manufacturers to list the active ingredients of their product on their labels; it was thus the first act to regulate some forms of advertising. Later, other laws and regulations were pushed to ensure the truthfulness of advertising. Many of them were published in the weekly trade publication called *Printer's Ink* that was focused on the advertising industry. What is more, these events contributed to the downfall of the industry of patent medicines; however, the other ‘killer’ was aspirin, which was introduced before the World War I. However, the regulation environment, emergence of which was caused by patent medicines, became an integral part of the American advertising industry. Brands that survived had to be more careful about their statements and claims present in their promotional materials.⁶¹

The notable changes that occurred during the 19th century influenced all areas of social life. In the economic sphere, the most important fact to underline is that the national economy was ‘born’ at the turn of the 19th century. Manufacturing of domestic products resulted in the development of trading; moreover, new inventions and technological innovations brought previously unimaginable possibilities for the economic rise. Politically, the 1860s, tragically influenced by the Civil War which had a significant impact on the country, were probably the worst period of the century. The 19th century also transformed American people's lifestyles, habits, manners; gradually, they became accustomed to the rules of consumer society. As of the advertising development, this century could be considered as the period when the ‘true American’ advertising emerged. First of all, advertising came into wider use; moreover, advertising agents appeared, the first advertising agencies were established, the first national advertising campaigns were launched, the first brands and memorable logos and slogans were created and used successfully.

51 O'GUINN, T. C., ALLEN, CH. T., SEMENIK, R. J.: *Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion*. Mason : South-Western Cengage Learning, 2009, p. 81.

52 SIVULKA, J.: *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*. Boston : Wadsworth, 2012, p. 34-35.

53 TWITCHELL, J. B.: *Adcult USA*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 69.

54 P. T. Barnum was one of the most famous personalities of American show business, often described as the first great adman in America. His business (as well as life philosophy) was that exaggeration was nothing bad as far as people were satisfied with what they got for their money. His practices are today known as “Barnum advertising”, the essence of which is exaggerating, half-truths, massive campaigns and dissemination of shocking information. He believed in the power of advertising and publicity, so he used it to profit from the public's taste for what he called “humbug”. That is why he is often called “Prince of Humbug”. The ads from the Barnum era are often defined as bold, carnivalesque, garish, filled with fantastic promises, unreal and unlikely issues or, more precisely, lies (remark by the author).

55 MARCHAND, R.: *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1985, p. 8.

56 FOX, S.: *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators*. Champaign : University of Illinois Press, 1997, p. 15.

57 TWITCHELL, J. B.: *Adcult USA*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 69.

58 To find out more about the emergence of Czechoslovak advertising and its measurement, see: PAVLŮ, D.: The Beginnings of Market Research and Measurement of Market Advertising Effectiveness. In *Communication Today*, 2016, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 52-64.

59 HOLM, N.: *Advertising and Consumer Society*. London : Palgrave, 2017, p. 21-22.

60 HOLM, N.: *Advertising and Consumer Society*. London : Palgrave, 2017, p. 15-34.

61 TELLIS, G. J.: *Reklama a podpora prodeje*. Praha : Grada, 2000, p. 37.

Advertising has always reflected societal changes very sensitively – it is, after all, a peculiar reflection of the world we live in. Directly or indirectly, it is an interesting ‘mirror’ of societal metamorphoses occurring in different periods of the human history.

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