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PETER M. TROUP
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
MARKETING

March 23, 1990

Ms. Cheryl Tiegs
[redacted]

Dear Cheryl,

Last August, Stone Roberts wrote you regarding the selection of Cover Girl advertising to become a permanent part of the Archives Center for Advertising History. The Smithsonian selected Cover Girl because of its important role in recognizing and reflecting the changing values of American women.

Well, since then . . . even though Noxell has merged with Procter & Gamble, and Cover Girl advertising has moved from Lintas to Grey, the Smithsonian project has moved ahead.

Scott Ellsworth, a historian with the Smithsonian is in charge of the project, which includes "writing the history" of Cover Girl that will accompany the advertising into the Archives. He will be contacting you to arrange a brief interview about your career and involvement with Cover Girl advertising.

If you have any questions regarding the project, please feel free to call me at [redacted].

Sincerely,

Peter M. Troup

PMT:dl

bcc: S. Ellsworth

For more information contact the Archives Center at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURE

Center for Advertising History
Room C340

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[redacted]

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April 13, 1990

Ms. Cheryl Tiegs
[redacted]

Dear Ms. Tiegs:

As I believe you are aware, the Smithsonian Institution has been working with the Noxell Corporation on a history of Cover Girl advertising. (See attached letter from Peter Troup).

Part of this work will involve preserving, here at the National Museum of American History, a complete collection of Cover Girl advertisements. Another part is the series of oral history interviews I have been conducting with some twenty-five individuals associated with the creation of Cover Girl--an advertising campaign which we here at the Smithsonian feel is one of the most significant in the history of American advertising.

Because the success of Cover Girl owes so much to your contributions, I write today to request an interview with you. If possible, I would like to come up to New York sometime during the next few weeks and interview you about your career and your work for Cover Girl. The interview should take about one hour.

If this is agreeable to you, would you mind contacting me on scheduling the interview? My number here at the Smithsonian is [redacted]0.

Thank you for your time, and I sincerely hope that we'll have a chance to speak in the near future.

Best wishes,

Scott Ellsworth

Scott Ellsworth
Historian

For more information contact the Archives Center at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
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with

CHERYL TIEGS

in

Los Angeles, California

February 26, 1991

by Scott Ellsworth

Abstracted by Amy R. Fitch

For Cover Girl Oral History Project

Interview # 25

Archives Center
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

TAPE ABSTRACT AND INDEX
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Cheryl Tiegs is one of the best known American supermodels. She began working with Cover Girl Makeup in 1961, with their first campaigns. She was born in Minnesota and grew up in southern California. After two years at California State University in Los Angeles, she began modeling full-time. Besides Cover Girl, Tiegs has repeadtedly been involved in projects with Sears and Sports Illustrated.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Tiegs discusses her career with Cover Girl from its inception, and its impact on her career. She elaborates some on what she considers to be the characteristics of its successful advertising. Finally, she describes her recent work and her future plans.

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Abstract of interview with Cheryl Tiegs, 2/26/91
Los Angeles, CA
Interviewer: Scott Ellsworth

BACKGROUND

:20 Cover Girl started in 1961, and Tiegs was there at the beginning.

:30 The Sports Illustrated 25th anniversary swimsuit issue had an articles about Tiegs. Her parents' occupations involved beautifying others, but extravagance did not enter their personal life. Simple wardrobe and looks were her models when she was growing up.

2:10 She was born in 1947 in Minnesota. Her family moved in 1952 to Alhambra, California near Pasadena. They moved for the simpler climate and to get out of farming.

3:00 When she was younger, Tiegs never could see models as real people. It never occured to her to try to become one.

3:30 An obscure talent agent visited one of her high school clubs and invited many of the girls to consider acting On a friend's suggestion, she tried it and had a few jobs. She started slowly in the business, and became a extra in a few beach movies. She was happy to work for about five dollars an hour or twenty-five dollars a day.

4:40 She continued to take occassional roles and slowly improved her ability. Tiegs spent two years at California State University in Los Angeles.

5:00 She began modeling for TEEN magazine, and the got the main role in a Cola California ad. This job led to her first appearance in Glamour magazine. The editor saw her cola ad and booked her without meeting her first. This was the big breakthrough in her career.

5:30 After her second year at college, she spent the summer in New York, where she had rapid success.

6:00 Nina Blanchard became her Los Angeles agent quickly after that. Eileen Ford was her agent in New York for most of the time.

COVER GIRL

6:30 In her first Cover Girl commercial, she appeared as a bride. It was shot in New York.

7:00 Cover Girl was known for using only top models, so when they asked her to appear, it was quite an honor.

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HOW COVER GIRL SHAPED HER CAREER

7:50 Cover Girl shut the door to other cosmetics for her, but she considers that a good move. She found the work satisfying. Cover Girl always had prestigious advertising and a good focus statement to the fashion industry. Their memorable commercials often used the models names, rather than just their faces.

10:00 Both she and Cover Girl were appropriatly placed for making models' names known. During the 1960's, the public began to realize what a lucrative business modeling can be. Models were being considered more than "just a pretty face." To be truly successful, a model had to have a personality as well as a look that the public liked enough to see again.

11:20 Changes brought about by the women's rights movement did have some effect on changes in advertisements and in model recognition.

12:10 Everything Tiegs has done has evolved from her modeling career.

12:40 What made her professional relationship with Cover Girl successful was working together closely as a family. She would travel, play, tour the factory with staff members, as well as meet their families. They became a part of her life.

13:40 This has taught her to go overboard in every job she has taken. She believes in doing more than is written or contracted for, and has discovered a mutual reaction from her coworkers.

14:40 Her working class background has had a definite effect on her attitude. She is grateful for the work she has gotten, and always has been very productive in response. She knows that she started with nothing and worked her way to where she is now.

15:20 The first commercial she ever did was for Like softdrink.

15:50 Modeling taught Tiegs professionalism and discipline. It is important to have an attitude that is upbeat and interested.

IMPACT ON IMAGE OF WOMEN

17:20 Tiegs appreciates the responsibility of being a role model. She feels that she has been a positive one, with a healthy look and attitude.

19:00 She likes being a positive inspiration toward women's attitudes toward themselves.

IMPACT ON THE ADVERTISEMENTS

20:00 She tried to shape some of the Cover Girl ads, but they would not allow it. At the time they were using a big picture of the product and a tiny picture of the model. They have since changed that approach.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

20:40 Her work with Sports Illustrated came up through her agent.

21:20 Tiegs put complete effort into her work with both Sports Illustrated and Sears.

22:00 She has never regretted any of her work nor been ashamed of it. She saw the work she did for SI as promotion for a healthy lifestyle.

OTHER WORK

22:40 She was on the cover of TIME magazine in 1978, and stopped modeling at that point. She worked with "Good Morning, America" for three years. Starting in 1980, she spent ten years on a Sears campaigns.

23:20 Her inspiration has come from her parents, her husband, and close personal friends. She makes her ads close and personal, so that she is the same person on the page that she is in reality.

24:50 She has just finished working with Sears, and is taking some time off.

25:10 Cover Girl and she still maintain a relationship, but she is not currently working with them.

HOW SHE HOPES TO BE AN INFLUENCE

26:50 She would like to influence women to a healthy lifestyle. She thinks that is what she exuded with her Sports Illustrated exercise video. She would like to be the image of toned beauty.

29:00 Unlike when she was growing up, the image of women between 40 and 60 is not a negative one. She would like to expand on that and promote a healthy self-confidence for women of all ages.

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