

The Pause That Refreshes



Coca Cola has always been viewed as being at the top of the game in terms of advertising and branding. Long before there was the internet or tv commercials, Coca Cola sold people on their carbonated beverage by associating it's "refreshing taste" with attractive, wholesome women.

Known as the Coca Cola Girls, these fresh-faced females served as the models for a team of talented illustrators who were skilled in presenting the epitome of feminism to the American Public. This successful campaign ran for nearly 70 years, from 1890 to 1960, spanning both World Wars and the Great Depression.

Largely modeled after the Gibson Girls made popular by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson, the Coca Cola ads began by featuring women in Victorian outfits, both refined and demure. As the decades passed, the depiction of the women also changed to reflect a more independent and confident demeanor.

This Golden Age of Illustration began to wane with the rise of television and broadcast advertising. But the image of attractive, alluring young women gracing the billboards of our cities and the pages of our newspapers will forever be a part of our remembered past. And our family had a part to play in it.

Valeria Lamar (pictured above) was the sister-in-law of my grand uncle. She and her sister Camille were both hired by the Coca Cola Company to be models for their Coca Cola Girl campaign. They hailed from Macon, Ga (not too far from the Coca Cola headquarters in Atlanta).

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