



*The Old and New West*  
**HELPS RADIO SELL FOR BORAX**

By FLORENCE SMALL

**T**HE PACIFIC COAST Borax Co., Los Angeles, spends half a million dollars a year on advertising, and for 20 years its every appropriation has been channeled into radio.

For two decades the company has relied exclusively on

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Mrs. McCANN

**THE 20-Mule team re-assembled for the Death Valley Centennial Celebration held in the valley on Dec. 3, 1949. Wagons shown are the original wagons, largest ever made.**

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radio to sell its products, 20 Mule Team Borax and Boraxo. Recent sales data reveals that radio has responded yeomanly to the trust, doubling the already prodigious sales of the products since 1940.

For the past five years the destiny of the account has ridden high on the stalwart shoulders of *The Sheriff*, an action-primed western program heard on ABC Friday, 9:30-9:55 p.m.

But for all his derring-do, *The Sheriff*—all man and two yards high—owes his existence, as well as a great measure of sales success, to a woman. That woman is Mrs. Dorothy McCann, vice president of McCann-Erickson.

Mrs. McCann's first affiliation with the Borax account dates back to 1930 and marked a significant sign post in the productional development of radio itself.

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**Dramatic Shows Then Were New to Radio**

Most of the radio programs of that day were musical shows. There

were only one or two dramatic offerings on the air. One of them was *Real Folks*, sponsored by the Chesebrough Mfg. Co. (who now sponsors *Dr. Christian*). *Real Folks* was Mrs. McCann's first radio production, started in 1928. Its mushrooming success led the McCann-Erickson agency to recommend to the Pacific Coast Borax Co. that it embark on the new dramatic form to sell its products.

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**Show Runs Continuously From 1930 to 1944**

In spite of the deep rooted feeling in the radio industry that the audience would not understand drama which they could only hear and not see, the Pacific Coast Borax Co. had the vision to realize that radio drama could become the most basic entertainment of all. And so a new dramatic radio show *Death Valley Days*, was launched. Depicting stories of the Old West in the region where borax was mined, the show was inaugurated on Sept. 30, 1930, on NBC.

It rapidly became one of the favorite listening periods on the

air, bringing a new breadth and romantic flavor to radio. Continuing unbrokenly to 1944, the program was heard for the latter three years on CBS.

In 1944, however, the program which in a sense set a pattern of modernity, was itself supplanted by a more modern program. Seeing to retain the feel of the West while adding the extra allure of mystery, Mrs. McCann conceived the idea for *The Sheriff*. It was an immediate success; old listeners remained and new ones were added. And most significantly, sales of 20 Mule Team Borax and Boraxo continued to build.

The program has a consistent Hooper rating of 9 or 10 and is considered by the network to be one of its anchor shows for Friday night programming. The role of *The Sheriff* is played by Don Briggs. His girl-friend, Jan Thackery, portrayed by Helen Claire. Her consultant on psychology, the Professor, is played by William Postmore.

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**History of Borax Co. Is Drama Itself**

Hardly less enthralling than one of its dramatic presentations is the history of the Pacific Coast Borax Co. itself. That history actually