

anthology series set in a western locale. The fact that this locale is closely identified with our product didn't hurt, either."

In The Beginning ■ At first, the *Death Valley Days* tv series was broadcast every other week. As tv grew and sales continued to increase, the schedule was stepped up to a broadcast a week in major markets, starting in 1956 with New York, adding the next eight markets, then the next 16 and so on until today of the more than 130 markets in which the program is seen, only 20 stations continue to carry it on an alternate week basis.

Sales of 20 Mule Team products had doubled during the 1940's, then trebled in the '50's and the company's annual report for 1960 noted that in that year they "were above last year's record levels." By mid-1959 expansion of advertising was in order. Mr. Parker and other executives in his department and at McCann-Erickson felt that experimentation with other types of tv programming than *Death Valley Days* was called for. As President James M. Gerstly reported to the annual stockholders meeting last February: "Now that nearly every home in the USA has television, we can no longer expect annual growth in audience by reason of the sale of sets to new families.

"We conducted tests last year to see if we could effectively reach a new audience if we used daytime television in addition to our *Death Valley Days* evening program. Results of these tests obtained within one year were encouraging, so we embarked on a national daytime campaign, starting October 1, 1960.



Ruth Woodman, who wrote the original 'Death Valley Days' radio script, helped with the transition to tv. Story editor for the series, she is still turning out the western yarns over thirty years later.

"As you can imagine, it takes time for the cumulative effect of such campaigns to be felt and little can be expected within six months. However, there is evidence that we are making progress, though perhaps at a slower initial rate than experienced in our tests. If these trends persist, results should be increasingly satisfactory as the year advances. The net cost after taxes of this additional advertising amounts to some \$500,000 or 12¢ per common share per quarter."

Daytime, Too ■ In addition to *Death Valley Days*, the 20 Mule Team Dept. of U. S. Borax is now using participations in five of NBC-TV's five-a-week daytime programs: *The Jan Murray Show*, *The Loretta Young Show*, *From These Roots*, *Make Room for Daddy* and *Young Dr. Malone*.

For the first quarter of the 1961 fiscal year, the company's net income was 23 cents per share, compared to 31 cents for the same quarter of the previous year. Sales were about the same. "So you can see," Mr. Gerstly told the stockholders, "if advertising had been held to last year's levels, with no consequent reduction in sales, our earnings this quarter would have exceeded those of the like 1960 quarter by about 10%."

At the end of the second quarter, Hugo Reimer, president of U. S. Borax & Chemical Corp. was able to inform stockholders: "Sales of consumer products have reached higher levels than for comparable periods in previous years and recent surveys show a steady increase of 20 Mule Team Borax sales in grocery stores, suggesting, as anticipated, growing effectiveness of the higher advertising expenditures incurred this year."

During its radio run, *Death Valley Days* was produced for its sponsor by the program department of McCann-Erickson in New York under the supervision of Dorothy McCann. With its entry into television in 1952, *Death Valley Days* was filmed by the Gene Autry organization, Flying "A" Productions, then was handled by McGowen Productions, which later became a subsidiary of McCann-Erickson known as La Brea Productions. In 1959, production of the series was transferred to Filmaster Inc., which is currently producing the half-hour films for the 1961-62 season at Producers Studios in Hollywood. Ruth Woodman, story editor at Filmaster, still has the final say on all *Death Valley Days* scripts and, to keep her hand in, she will have several credits among the new shows being produced.

Reruns ■ For seven years, U. S. Borax used the *Death Valley Days* programs on tv under its own sponsorship and stored the master prints away, in their old mines in Death Valley, resolutely resisting all offers for rerun rights. But,



Stanley Andrews, tv's 'Old Ranger' appears on every 'Death Valley Days' show as story teller and as commercial spokesman for U. S. Borax & Chemical Corp.'s 20 Mule Team Borax and Boraxo products.

two years ago, the company decided to allow some of the earlier programs to be rebroadcast under other sponsorship. The name was changed to *The Pioneers* and certain features with strong *Death Valley Days* identification such as the 20 Mule Team and the bugle call were withheld from the rerun versions of the original series. Otherwise few changes were needed. Syndication of *The Pioneers* is handled by Peter M. Robeck & Co. in association with McCann-Erickson.

The use of *Death Valley* and the 20 mule team as keynotes of the tv series, and in radio before that, are authentic and legitimate. For more than 30 years, from 1884 to 1927, *Death Valley* was the principal source of borax. For a dozen years or more, the 20 mule teams hauled 24-ton wagon loads of crude borax across the desert and over the mountains, without a single breakdown, until their replacement by a special railroad line in 1898. Even after that date, the mules and the wagons were called on for emergency duty until their final trip, save for exhibition purposes in 1907.

Distribution of the 20 Mule Team consumer products, initially borax and boric acid, began in the 1890's through drug stores; grocery stores came later. Bar soaps and soap powders for laundry and dishwashing were added and in the early 1900's the first powdered hand soap was introduced. It was called Grime Off, a name later changed to Boraxo.

All Those Mules ■ The use of the 20 mule team as the trademark of the consumer products began in 1891. Adver-