

20-Mule Team Visits Manchester, 1918

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A promotion for Borax soap traveled around the country, coming to Connecticut towns, including Manchester, in fall 1918. Photographer John Knoll (1887-1955) captured the excitement of the visit, showing the crowds that came out to see this “Mammoth Unduplicated Cavalcade.” Knoll’s photos also show buildings in Downtown Manchester. At the far left of this photo is the former Orford Hotel, which became Marlows. The building middle left with 3 gables became Regals. The Ferris building on the right of the photo was moved in 1923 to Oak Street. A *Manchester Herald* office can be seen in this picture.



COMING TO HARTFORD

See the Great Parade!
Mammoth Unduplicated Cavalcade!
The Greatest and Last of Its Kind!
A Breath from the Historic Far West!
See the Alkali Dust Fly!
Examine the Tremendous 8000 lb. Wagons!

Watch Essex 151
Turn a Corner

See the Celebrated

20-MULE BORAX TEAM

From the hottest place on earth--Death Valley, California

Hear Tarrantula Pete Talk

Free Samples

Buy W. S. S.

This ad ran in *The Hartford Courant*, September 11, 1918. Bottom left of ad invites the public to “Hear Tarrantula Pete Talk.” By the way, “W.S.S.” means War Savings Stamps. Many ads at the time solicited support for the war effort – sale of bonds, donations to the Red Cross, etc.



The sign above the flat wagon says, “Home Services, Manchester War Bureau.” Right of sign: Patrick O’Leary’s lunch wagon, with “NCH” (as in “lunch”) visible. The brick building to the left of the War Bureau sign was built by Rocco and Felix Farr on the site previously occupied by the American Hotel, which had burned. The sign says Miss M. Campbell Millinery. When this building was completed, the Farr brothers leased space to merchants, including Glenney and Haultman. Farris occupied much of the upper floor as their living quarters.



Manchester street scene by John Knoll. There were actually 18 mules and two horses in the cavalcade, billed by Borax as “The Greatest and Last of Its Kind.”

From the ad, above:

**The Greatest and Last of Its Kind!
A Breath from the Historic Far West!
See the Alkali Dust Fly!
Examine the Tremendous 8000 lb. Wagons!**



This appears to be Tarantula Pete, telling the story of Borax, and its mining in Death Valley, California. Free samples!

“TARANTULA PETE” ARRESTED IN ENFIELD FOR BOND THEFTS

(Special to The Courant.)

Thompsonville, Sept. 7.

State Policemen Robert Bridgeman and J. W. Stiles came to town today and arrested “Tarantula Pete,” lecturer for the “Borax” 20-mule team, now travelling through the state advertising a soap. The state police waited until “Tarantula Pete” had spoken before a large crowd at Mulholland’s store, when the warrant for his arrest was read to him and he was taken away in an automobile.

It is alleged that he is wanted for the theft of Liberty Bonds and thrift stamps at Danabson, a few days ago, while the mule team was visiting that place. The “Borax” outfit left here for Suffield and Windsor Locks this afternoon.

Arrested for stealing Liberty Bonds! Sept. 8, 1918.

‘Twenty Mule Borax Team in Town.
The Twenty Mule California mule team advertising borax arrived at its first stopping place in this city yesterday afternoon in front of Hornblower’s store, No. 36 Ash street, at 3:10 p. m., just one hour and forty minutes behind schedule time. The cause of the delay was due to stops made at hills between Putnam and this city. There were eighteen mules and two horses hauling the four wagons of the outfit. The horses were hitched next to the first wagon. The driver, “Borax Bill,” guided the steeds with one long line used on the head mule on the left side. There were twelve men in the outfit all dressed in true “Wild West style.”

Willimantic news in The Courant, August 25, 1918. The “Great Parade” was making its way across Connecticut.

LOADED REVOLVERS FOUND ON SLACKERS

Men Following 20-Mule Team Arrested
in Thompsonville.

(Special to The Courant.)

Thompsonville, Sept. 7.

The police arrested today two young men as suspects, who were following the “Borax” 20-mule team across the Suffield bridge. The men were picked up on the Springfield road by an automobile of Hansell, Adams & Company, wholesale grocers of Springfield, and given a ride to Thompsonville. The men acted suspicious and the police were informed. When searched at the police station loaded revolvers were found on them, together with several cartridges and searchlights. They refuse to talk.

Thompsonville, CT; “slackers” attracted to the event.