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Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Budweiser Horses Visit Bangor, Part I

Date: recording date not noted; circa 1948

Recording number: D 16.38; CD 7, track 1

Length of recording: 15:20

[transcript begins]

IRVING HUNTER: Hello there. This is Irving Hunter recording a broadcast at the Bangor Fairgrounds through the facilities of the WLBZ mobile unit. The biggest draft horses on earth have come to town and they're right here at the Bangor Fairgrounds, the Budweiser world famous champion Clydesdale horses. These gigantic animals will be on display at the fairgrounds until 9 o'clock tonight, tomorrow from 5 to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 10 in the morning until 9 at night. There is no charge for admission. These famous Clydesdale horses have been brought to Bangor through the courtesy of Maine Distributors, 17 Front Street in Bangor and Anheuser Busch, Incorporated, St. Louis, Missouri.

Well we're going to take our roving microphone a bit later and go and talk with some of the handlers of the horses, but right now we have an opportunity to talk with the assistant manager of the show horse caravan, Bob Barrett, so we're going to learn a few things about the horses from Bob. Uh, first of all, Bob, let's find a little bit about these horses, the general size, the horse shoes they wear and things of that nature. How much do they weigh now?

BARRETT: Uh, 2,000 pounds and over. The biggest horse, Dandy, he goes 2260.

HUNTER: 2260, Brother. And what about the size of the horseshoes? I had a chance to look them over and they certainly have big feet.

BARRETT: They're nine inches across and they weigh three pounds apiece.

HUNTER: How does that compare with the ordinary shoe?

BARRETT: Oh, it's twice as big. The other big draft horses, such as the Belgian or the [Persian?] the Clyde is known to have the biggest feet.

HUNTER: Now where do these horses come from originally?

BARRETT: They come from Scotland. We import all our horses. We got a few from Canada last year, but we'd much rather get them in Scotland because we get a better horse.

HUNTER: You get them directly from Scotland?

BARRETT: Uh, hm.

HUNTER: And traveling around I suppose you've covered a lot of territory. How much do you travel and for example, where are you going when you get through here, things of that nature, Bob?

BARRETT: Well, last year we traveled 15,000 miles. That took in California, New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Missouri, a few other states.

HUNTER: Sounds like a wonderful life.

BARRETT: So we're going from here down to Waterville, Maine, and then we're working our way back to St. Louis. We'll be back in St. Louis November the 3rd.

HUNTER: I see. I notice you have a tremendous caravan of huge trucks here. Let's dwell on those a bit. They look like they are a special sort of trailer truck. Can you tell us a bit something about that?

BARRETT: They were built special for the horses here, each van costing \$23,000 apiece. As you've probably seen if you have been inside the trucks they are all veneer paneling and they are not air conditioned as a lot of people think they are.

HUNTER: I noticed they have quite a row of windows on them and there are screens and so forth. The horses really travel in luxury style.

BARRETT: Oh, yes. We have to keep them cool, in this hot weather especially, because they lose a lot of weight when you ship a horse.

HUNTER: Well I don't know, at their weight, I would think they could afford to lose a little. [Both men laugh.] Incidentally, I notice that these Clydesdale horses are more or less uniform in marking and so forth, I presume that's a characteristic of a Clydesdale, is that the idea?

BARRETT: Well, a lot of times you get bay horses, bay Clydes, with black legs, but they look more flashier with white legs, see, so that's why it takes us so long, we might buy three or four horses and only use one because only one matches up with our team.

HUNTER: Oh, I see. I noticed they were very uniform, they do match up beautifully. Incidentally, would you describe one of these Clydesdale horses for me, Bob? That is I mean the color, you probably know the horse terms where I don't. How would you describe one of these?

BARRETT: Well they are bay horses.

HUNTER: What do you mean by bay, Bob?

BARRETT: That's the color of them. That's like a brown.

HUNTER: A brown, uh, hm.

BARRETT: Brown. And all their legs are white, we'll say from their knees down, from their hocks down, and all have white faces, a blaze face we call it.

HUNTER: A blaze face? That's what I wanted, the terms. I didn't know just how to describe them. I noticed they were handsome, and I wanted the official terms. Is there anything else of interest that you can tell us about your travels around with this caravan of yours and the parade that's going to follow?

BARRETT: Well one thing I'd like to mention is that we're going to be at the Maine State Fair the opening day, that is, I think the 20th, Labor Day? Labor Day.

HUNTER: Where is that, Bob?

BARRETT: Lewiston.

HUNTER: In Lewiston.

BARRETT: So, a lot of people like to see them doing an exhibition, that is a figure eight and backing a wagon up to fence and a few other things and keeping the horses on a full gallop might like to come on down and take a look at them.

HUNTER: Well, that brings up another point, Bob. I figure that these horses, you hook them up the eight of them and you went marching around town and that was the story. They do extra maneuvers and things of that nature, too?

BARRETT: That's right. We go on exhibition and do figure eights and full gallop and backing the horses into a fence and bringing the lead horses back to the foot of the wagon and feed the lead horses sugar and bring them back again and go out of a ring or a race track on a full gallop.

HUNTER: And some of those maneuvers, do you put them on here at the fairgrounds? You'll be here through Sunday night.

BARRETT: No, we won't put them on here.

HUNTER: Will you do any of that during the parade today?

BARRETT: Oh, no, we can't very well do that because the steel shoes and the streets, some are pretty slick.

HUNTER: I see.

BARRETT: You'd have a traffic problem, too, you know.

HUNTER: That's right, you take eight horses and a huge wagon down through town that's going to create enough of a traffic problem and quite a job just to drive them through town I should imagine. Well, we'll talk with the gentleman who drives them later and maybe we'll find out some of the tricks of the trade from him.

BARRETT: Good.

HUNTER: I want to thank you very much, Bob Barrett, for taking part of this broadcast and giving us some information and we're going to watch this parade of yours through town and if I get a chance maybe I'll ride with the team. Would that be arranged?

BARRETT: Why, sure.

HUNTER: All right, I'll take you up on that. Thanks very much. You just heard from Bob Barrett, Assistant Manager of the Show Horse Caravan. Now I'd like to introduce William Hogan, District Sales Manager. Mr. Hogan.

HOGAN: Thank you very kindly, Irving, for the introduction, and I'm not a horseman, my responsibility is sales for the state of Maine and I want to express our happiness and pleasure in having this opportunity to bring our famous Budweiser, world-famous champion Clydesdales, to Bangor. I know that we have a great lot of horse lovers in this part of Maine, and I know that you'll be most interested in seeing the

horses and seeing the wagon and having an opportunity to see some of the finest horses in the world. Irving, that's about all my horse knowledge that I have at my disposal. Outside of that, the only thing I would like to take the opportunity of expressing is the excellent cooperation that we've had from our distributor here, Maine distributors, and making all these facilities at our disposal, and it's not very often I have an opportunity of this kind. I certainly want to thank our loyal consumers of Budweiser. Thanks very kindly.

HUNTER: O.K., you're welcome, Bill. You've just heard from Mr. William Hogan, District Sales Manager. And incidentally, my horse knowledge doesn't go any further than yours, I think Bill, so I'm going in to talk with the handlers in just a few moments, and well, practically get the word right from the horse's mouth. Right now it's my pleasure to bring up another gentleman to our microphone as we do this broadcast directly from the Bangor Fair Grounds, Mr. Mayberry, President and General Manager of Maine Distributors. I think you should be congratulated, sir, on bringing this fine show to Bangor, and what would you like to tell us about it?

MAYBERRY: Irving, thank you very much. Of course I am particularly happy that we have been able to bring these twelve beautiful horses to Bangor. It's a sight everybody within driving distance of Bangor should make an effort to come in and watch them on the street as they parade between 11 and 2 today and tomorrow between 11 and 2 and there'll be an exhibit from 5 o'clock to 9 o'clock tonight, and tomorrow night, and all day Sunday from 10 in the morning to 9 o'clock at night. These are twelve of the finest horses in the entire world. Each one of these horses, Irving, weigh over a ton apiece. There'll all stallions and they are just as gentle and kind as they can be. And incidentally we have something for the kiddies. We have the world's smallest donkey here, and that's something the kiddies should all see.

HUNTER: Well, that's quite a contrast to those huge horses.

MAYBERRY: That's exactly right. There's quite a difference.

HUNTER: Well, thank you, sir. I'm sure the people will want to come down and see these horses, and we're going in to talk with some of the handlers in just a moment and to give you a little bit of a word picture of these horses and the things that go on more-or-less behind the scenes. By now you've heard from Mr. Mayberry, President and General Manager of Maine Distributors. And now I'm going to swap microphones, take a walkie-talkie mic so I can go in underneath the Grand Stand here at the Bangor Fair Grounds and talk with the handlers of these world-famous champion Clydesdale horses.

Well, here we are underneath the Grand Stand at the Bangor Fair Grounds with the WLBZ roving microphone and we're all set to ask a few questions of one of the gentlemen who works with the horses here. What's your name first?

TRENHOLM: Frank Trenholm.

HUNTER: Well, Frank, it's a pleasure to meet you here and you have some beautiful horses with which to work, and I'd like to know a little bit about them. Well, for example, they are all set to parade now through town, they're all hitched up and their brass work is all shined up. Well, for example, who has charge of all that harnessing and keeping their harness worked up like the way it is?

TRENHOLM: We have two tackmen who work constantly on the harness, washing it, shining it up as well every day. It takes about 5 hours.

HUNTER: That's their complete job, that's all they have to do?

TRENHOLM: Yes, sir.

HUNTER: Well, it's a big job, what with the 8 horses and all the beautiful brass work and it's polished to a bright, gleaming finish there. How about getting the horses, well I don't know the horse terms, you know, getting them rubbed down, cleaned up and so forth, who takes care of that?

TRENHOLM: Myself and 3 other fellas, there's 4 of us all together groomers, it takes about 4 to 5 hours to clean them up and get ready to harness them up and get them out on the street.

HUNTER: You fellas have been working here for 4 or 5 hours getting this parade all set to go. Well you certainly have a wonderful result for all of your work here. I noticed the horses not only have their harness all shined up and polished but they are decorated, they have their manes all fixed up specially there with trimmings on them, red and white rosebuds, right?

TRENHOLM: Yes, sir.

HUNTER: Is that quite a job, getting that hair-do?

TRENHOLM: Well, yes sir.

[Both men laugh.]

HUNTER: Do you do some of that work yourself?

TRENHOLM: Yes, sir. Two of them.

HUNTER: You have two horses?

TRENHOLM: Each one of the groomers have to braid two horses.

HUNTER: And the tails are braided, too?

TRENHOLM: That's braided by the driver.

HUNTER: The driver takes care of that. And they have red and white ribbons on. Well, they certainly are very handsome, all set for the parade here. How are these horses to work with, after all they weigh over a ton apiece, do they make you a little nervous or anything?

TRENHOLM: They're gentle.

HUNTER: They really are?

TRENHOLM: Yes, sir.

HUNTER: Well they seem to be. They're standing here ready to take off on the parade. They are well behaved but they certainly are big horses. What about a blacksmith? I presume you have one with you.

TRENHOLM: Yes sir, that's done by the driver, Walter Brady.

HUNTER: He's the blacksmith, it must keep him kind of busy.

TRENHOLM: Oh, yes sir, every evening.

HUNTER: Every evening? Uh, huh. What about the stall that you have set up here under the Grand Stand? Do you bring those with you?

TRENHOLM: Yes, sir, them are all portable.

HUNTER: All portable.

TRENHOLM: And everywhere we go we set them up, it takes about a half hour to set them up.

HUNTER: Well, thank you very much, Frank. I can see that you fellas have your work cut out for you, that it's a full time job taking care of this wonderful team of world-famous Budweiser Clydesdale horses. Thanks very much, Frank. The parade's almost set to start, so I'm going to let you go back to work.

TRENHOLM: Thanks very much.

HUNTER: All right. Well here we are with the WLBZ roving microphone up on the seat of this beautiful red and white Budweiser wagon and ahead of us, the eight famous, world-famous, Clydesdale champion horses. We're starting off on this parade route, leaving the Bangor Fair Grounds, and here on the seat beside me the driver, the assistant driver, and Mr. Mayberry, and while we're jogging along here incidentally the sun is out now and it's gleaming from the beautiful brass work on these horses and as far ahead as we can see are these tremendous Clydesdale horses and coming back toward us, the long lines, the reins that the driver has hold of up here. How he ever manages to find enough fingers to hold all of those reins I'll never know. So maybe we can talk it over with him a little bit and find out some of these things. Of course, he's a bit busy with all these horses, so we're going to work along and see how we can make out as we go along down through here. So, I tell you what, sitting right beside me is Gene, how do you pronounce your last name, Gene?

BRAITHER: Braither.

HUNTER: Gene Braither. He's the assistant driver, and before we go over to Walter Brady who is driving right now, suppose, Gene, we ask you a few questions before, as you don't seem to have anything to do right now. First of all, how do you ever get to learn how to drive a team of horses like this?

BRAITHER: I don't know, you have to be pretty lucky.

HUNTER: You have to be pretty lucky. Well, I suppose you fellows have been around horses quite a long while. In your case, how long have you been fooling around with horses.

BRAITHER: Since I've been about sixteen – seventeen years old.

HUNTER: You've certainly got some experience behind you. Is there quite a trick to driving a team of this size? I presume there is but you drive a pair of horses, usually that keeps you busy, with 8 of these Clydesdales all harnessed up it must be quite some job. What are some of the tricks of the trade, that you want to divulge, that is?

BRAITHER: Your fingers are the biggest trick.

[Part 1 of the WLBZ recording ended here. Continued in part 2.]

[transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

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