



THE IRON HORSE

Fox 1924

Directed by John Ford

Cast

Dave Brandon George O'Brien

Miriam Marsh Madge Bellamy

Jesson Cyril Chadwick

Bauman Fred Kohler

Corporal Casey J. Farrell Macdonald

Private Mackay James Welch

Colonel Cody George Waggoner

Abraham Lincoln Charles Edward Bull

Scenario Charles Kenyon & John Russell

Titles Charles Darnton

Photography George Schneiderman

Additional Photography Burnett Guffey

Assistant Director Edward O'Ferna

Duration: 132 minutes plus interval

Projection speed: variable

Aperture: full

Score by John Lanchbery (50 players)



LIVE CINEMA

THE IRON HORSE

**One man's dream becomes a nation's policy and the
States are united by the construction of a railroad.
The Iron Horse is the American Dream fulfilled.**

The Iron Horse, John Ford's first epic western sets the tone for much of his future work. A tale of ambition, jealousy, perseverance and revenge set against a wide and untamed wilderness and peopled by the most authentic cast of cowboys and Indians you will ever see.

Filmed in 1924, it gives us a rare view of the virgin West. Ford's company was transported to Nevada on a circus train which would be their home for the duration of production. Once on the plains, the company had to construct a town around them. The Pony Express office doubled as a photographic laboratory and the cutting room was installed in a Pullman carriage. The rough and ready atmosphere on-screen never evaporated off-screen. 'The Ford outfit was the roughest, goddamndest outfit you ever saw, from the director downward,' said prop man, Lefty Hough. The cast included an Arizona sheriff, a number of real-life gunfighters and saloon girls who came along with the building of the town. The ranks of extras were swelled by Paiute Indians and a team of Chinese workers - some of whom were survivors from the building of the real railroad only fifty-five years earlier.

In the featured roles, George O'Brien's rugged physique and good looks make him a convincing Davy Brandon. He injects the role with sincerity, good humour and a natural presence perfect for the idealistic young hero. His childhood sweetheart, Miriam Marsh, is played by Madge Bellamy, described as 'the most beautiful girl in America'. The comedy trio of Irish navies is played by regular members of Ford's stock company, J. Farrell MacDonald and James Welch. The whole picture is as straight forward a western as Ford ever made - historical characters step in and out - Abraham Lincoln ... Buffalo Bill Cody ... Wild Bill Hickock ... and it concludes with a full scale reconstruction of the wedding of the rails at Promontory Point, Utah in May 1869.

In writing his accompaniment John Lanchbery looked to Ford's sound films and their skilful use of folk songs. Like *Stagecoach*, he uses 'The Lone Prairie' for the prairie sequences. The score is a combination of authentic songs and rousing original themes and captures perfectly the pioneering spirit of the times.