



Scene from "Wagonmaster," filmed in Moab, Utah, which will receive its western premiere in Salt Lake on May 9th. It is the story of a Mormon colonization of San Juan river region in early days.

## 'Wagonmaster' Films the Actual Story of San Juan, Utah, Colonization

Telling a real-life story of a Mormon trek to the San Juan river region of southeastern Utah, John Ford's new picture, "Wagonmaster" will have its western premiere at the Utah theater May 9. Opening on the stage in person the opening day will be the singing who are heard throughout the picture, the famous "Sons of the Desert."

"Wagonmaster," filmed near Moab, Utah, follows the tradition set by Director Ford which his previous hits "Stagecoach," "Fort Apache" and "She Wore a Yellow Hat." Whereas most western picture plots are based on nothing more substantial than the imaginations of their scenarists, "Wagonmaster" is a page from Mormon colonization history woven into an interesting film

Shortly after the founding of Salt Lake City in 1847, the Mormon leaders began sending out expeditions to colonize other parts of the future state. In 1879 a group was ordered to go to the distant San Juan river region in southeastern Utah to establish a new colony. Only a few wandering trappers had ever explored the area, and the little party fought its way across blistering deserts, repeated fordings of the turbulent Colorado river, and over rugged mountain ranges, hacking out channels in the solid rock for the

wheels of their clumsy wagons, before they finally reached their destination.

"Wagonmaster" is the recreated story of that perilous journey, with Ben Johnson in the title role of a young frontiersman hired to guide the party. Joanne Dru, Harry Carey Jr. and Ward Bond are also starred in the film, most of which was actually photographed along the original route. John Ford directed the picture, with Charles Kemper, Alan Mowbray and Jane Darwell heading the featured cast. Frank Nugent and Patrick Ford wrote the screen play.