

7-1-1949

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NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW

VOL. XXIV

JULY, 1949

No. 3

SPANISH-AMERICAN SLAVE TRADE IN THE GREAT BASIN, 1800-1853

By LELAND HARGRAVE CREER*

GOLD, glory, gospel—the three G's—these were the objectives that lured the Spanish conquistadors across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World beyond. They came at the close of the fifteenth century, more than a hundred years before their English, French and Dutch rivals. By 1600, more than 250,000 Spaniards were in possession of Central America, the West Indies, two-thirds of Mexico and a goodly portion of South America. Beyond Mexico stretched the fabulous Northern Mystery, whither went hundreds of Spanish explorers, chief among whom were De Soto, Cabeza de Vaca, Narvaez, Ponce de León, Coronado, Espejo, Férrelo, Cabrillo and Vizcaino, to mention only a few. They were looking for a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow which, according to Indian legend, was to be found at the Chicora Villages, home of the giant king Datha, or at the fabulous Gran Quivira. They were also searching for the mythical Strait of Anián, a legendary waterway, flowing from east to west, which was supposed to separate the North American Continent, thus affording a shorter and more expeditious route to India.

But the vast wastelands to the North yielded neither gold nor strait and the disappointed Spaniards turned their attention from this area and directed their interests thenceforth almost exclusively to the fabulous treasure houses of Mexico and Peru. And only when their foreign rivals threatened to

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invade these regions and thus challenge the security of the Spanish claim, did Spain retaliate by occupying the Borderlands as defensive outposts. Thus when the French under Ribaut and Laudonierre attempted to found a Huguenot colony on St. John's River in northern Florida, the Spaniards under Menendez retaliated by founding St. Augustine (1565); when Robert de La Salle projected a Gulf colony at La Bahía, near Galveston, Texas, the excited Spanish officials sent Alonzo de León, Domingo Ramón and the Marquis de Aguayo into far eastern Texas to Los Adaes (1716-1722); when the Spaniard Marino falsely reported that Sir Francis Drake, the great English buccaneer, had discovered the Strait of Anián and had already returned to England by entering that waterway and sailing eastward, Oñate met what appeared to be a real English threat by leading a band of colonists into New Mexico (1598); finally, when the Russians dispatched a number of expeditions down the Pacific Coast in the interests of furs, José de Gálvez, Visitador-General of New Spain, with the king's consent, sent Portolá, governor of Baja California, northward to occupy Alta California, particularly that area about the long-sought-for Bay of Monterey (1769). Thus the sole purpose of Spanish occupancy within the present limits of the United States was defense and the sole result of the Spanish efforts, before the winning of American independence in 1776, was the successful founding and holding of five strategic provinces as defensive outposts—St. Augustine (Florida); Los Adaes and San Antonio (Texas); Santa Fe (New Mexico); Pimeria Alta, south of the Gila River (Arizona); and San Diego and Monterey (California).

Of all these frontiers, California proved to be the most difficult to occupy. It was the most isolated of all the provinces. Great distances separated it from the Mexican frontier. There was no adequate supply route. The direct water route from San Blas was altogether too precarious and the overland route from Baja California was unsatisfactory. To obviate this difficulty, Juan Baptista Anza had opened up a trail directly westward from Tubac on the Sonora border, but this proved even more unsatisfactory than the

other two, principally because of the Apache menace, and within a few years it was discontinued. In 1775, one of Anza's guides, Father Francisco Garcés, attempted to find a better route to Monterey by crossing the country to the south and west of Santa Fe. Going along the Mojave River and through Cajon Pass, he was the first white man to traverse the route through San Joaquin Valley now followed by the Santa Fe Railroad. But the Garcés route proved too long and difficult to compete in usefulness with the Baja California, or even the Anza route, and it was soon discarded.

In 1776, the government of New Spain projected a new expedition in an attempt to find a better route to Monterey. This time an effort was made to discover a route to the north and west of Santa Fe. The expedition was entrusted to two friars, Fathers Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Francisco Atanacio Dominguez. The party, ten in number, left Santa Fe July 29, and after following a circuitous route of approximately eighteen hundred miles through western Colorado, central Utah and northern Arizona, returned to the New Mexican capital on January 2, 1777, without having accomplished its major objective.

Moreover, Spanish officials did nothing to follow up the work of the Dominguez-Escalante Expedition with further efforts to open up a route from Santa Fe to Monterey. Nor did they attempt to establish missions among the Yutah Indians as Escalante had promised the natives he would do. Instead, the government's attention was diverted to complicated European problems, occasioned by the outbreak of the war of American Independence and soon thereafter by the costly French Revolution. It was necessary also, because of complications and involvements with Russia, England, France and the United States, to devote more attention to the important provinces of Texas, Louisiana, Florida and California, for upon the successful defense of these depended the very safety of the Spanish Empire in North America.

But while the government did nothing officially in the interests of the Great Basin after 1776, it was not so with the Spanish traders who knew nothing and were little concerned with international affairs. These unscrupulous

individuals were concerned not primarily with the fur trade but with the inhumane traffic in Indian children, for which they exchanged fire-arms, intoxicating liquors, and California horses. Such trade continued uninterruptedly, although very little documentary evidence until 1805 appears to confirm this assumption. An important letter dated September 1, 1805, written by Joaquín de Real Alencaster, Governor of New Mexico, to the Commandant-General, refers to the trading activities of Manuel Mestas among the Yutahs. It seems that Mestas, spoken of as an interpreter of fifty years experience, had set out for the purpose of recovering horses stolen from the Spaniards by the Comanches and retaken by the Yutahs. A second letter dated November 20, 1805, corroborates this fact and definitely mentions the Timpanogos region as the area visited. These communications suggest more or less continual intercourse between the Spaniards of New Mexico and the Yutahs of the Utah Lake region.¹

Further mention of Spanish traders enroute to Los Angeles, California, from Santa Fe, New Mexico, by way of the Great Basin, is made by David Coyner, western newspaper correspondent, in his book, *The Lost Trappers*. According to Coyner, two English trappers, James Workman and Samuel Spencer, with eighteen others, left St. Louis in the spring of 1807 under the leadership of Ezekiel Williams. They were attacked by the Indians on the Arkansas River: Williams escaped and subsequently reached St. Louis; Workman and Spencer descended the Colorado River in the summer of 1809; all others were killed. *Near Moab, the two lost trappers met with a Spanish caravan, enroute from Santa Fe to Los Angeles over the Old Spanish Trail.*² Says Coyner:

The caravan was going towards Pueblo de los Angeles, a town in Upper California, near the coast of the Pacific, in which region of country they expected to be engaged in trading until the following

1. See Hill, Joseph J., "Spanish and Mexican Exploration and Trade Northwest from New Mexico into the Great Basin, 1765-1853," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, III, No. 1, January, 1930, pp. 16-17. The original letters are found in Twitchell, *Spanish Archives of New Mexico*, II, 478, 487, Nos. 1881 and 1925; photostat copies are filed in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

2. The Old Spanish Trail, according to Hill, before 1830, led to the Great Basin only. "It was developed as a result of the Spanish trade with the Yutahs. . . . It was not until the winter of 1830-31, when Wolfskill led a party to California by this north-

spring, when they expected to return to Santa Fe with horses and mules. Part of the company were men who lived in Upper California, but they had accompanied a caravan the last spring to Santa Fe, and were not returning home. Workman and Spencer determined to join the company and go to California, where they would spend the approaching winter, and in the spring return with them to New Mexico, whence they hoped some opportunity would present itself of getting back to the United States. They were therefore regularly taken into the service of the company, which was under the direction of a captain, and furnished with mules and articles as they needed.³

More significant is the account of an expedition to Utah Lake and southward in 1813. In this year seven men under the command of Mauricio Arze and Lagos García penetrated the very heart of the Great Basin. They were gone four months, leaving Abiquíu on March 16 and returning on July 12. The account gives no particulars as to the route followed. On September 1, the Governor of New Mexico, having received information regarding the affair, ordered the members of the party to appear before Manuel García, Alcalde of the *Villa de Santa Cruz de la Canada*, and file notarized accounts concerning details of the trip. "In the main," says Hill, who claims to have discovered this document filed with the Alcalde, and which is now in the Spanish Archives at Santa Fe,⁴ "these affidavits duplicate each other, with only here and there a unique detail." The company remained at the lake of the Timpanogos three days carrying on a little trade while waiting for the Indians of two rancherías to come together. When all were assembled a council was held, but, if we may rely upon the statement of the Spaniards in

ern trail, that the Old Spanish Trail was thought of as extending to California. But Wolfskill was an American and he led an American expedition. The misnomer, however, was of perfectly normal development. Parties going to California by this northern route set out from New Mexico along the Old Spanish Trail to the Great Basin, and so it was perfectly natural to speak of their having gone to California by way of the Old Spanish Trail. The term, therefore, soon became applied not only to the trail leading to the Great Basin but also to the branch of that trail leading to California." *Ibid.*, p. 3. The reference, however, to Workman and Spencer traversing the trail, all the way to California, seems to imply that Spanish caravans were regularly travelling this route by 1807. The Great Basin, of course, was a part of Alta California.

3. Coyner, David, *The Lost Trappers, passim*; extracts quoted by Alter, J. Cecil, *Utah: The Storied Domain*, I, 10-11.

4. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives* . . . II, 577, No. 2511; photostat copy in the Bancroft Library, University of California.

their affidavits *the Indians would trade nothing but Indian slaves, as "they had done on other occasions."* At this rebuff, the report says, the Indians began killing the horses of the Spaniards. After eight horses and a mule had been killed, the chief succeeded in quieting them. "Warned by this injury," continues Hill, "the Spaniards collected their remaining horses and, after standing guard over them all night, set out on the following day for Rio Sebero (Sevier River)." Here among the Bearded Indians whom Escalante earlier had encountered, they were greeted with the same hostile reception. One evening, "the Spaniards overheard the Indians discussing a plan by which they proposed to kill their visitors." Taking advantage of this information, the traders foiled the redskins by stealing away southward to the Colorado. Here again they met with the same kind of treatment.

This time, however, the commandant, having been informed of the extremity of the resentment of the Indians, called his men together and *gave them permission to purchase the slaves, "in order . . . not to receive another injury like the first one."* As a result of this decision, *twelve slaves were bought*, after which, the Spaniards continued their journey with no other incident worthy of note except the loss of a mule and a horse by drowning in crossing the Colorado. . . . Besides the slaves mentioned above, the Spaniards collected on their trip a total of one hundred and nine pelts. This, however, was stated to be "but a few." None of the statements tell what kind they were. And, concludes Hill: That the country over which the company had traveled was fairly well known seems to be implied from the fact that nothing to the contrary is stated and that no difficulties regarding the route are mentioned. The only place where they speak of having had a guide was from the Rio Sebero to the Bearded Indians. Two members of the party, however, understood the language of these Indians sufficiently well to be referred to as interpreters. These Indians, it was stated, were unknown to the traders, which seems to imply that the traders were at least somewhat acquainted with the others whom they visited.⁵

The Old Spanish Trail became the established route of the Spanish slave trader. Before 1830, the name was applied to the route which led from Santa Fe to the Great Basin only,

5. Hill, "Spanish and Mexican Exploration and Trade Northwest from New Mexico into the Great Basin, 1765-1853," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, III, No. 1, January, 1930, pp. 17-19; see also Snow, William J., "Utah Indians and the Spanish Slave Trade," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, II, No. 3, 68-69.

Some lines in quotations used in this paper are italicized by the author.

but after that date when the California trade became increasingly popular the Old Spanish Trail was thought of as the established route of trade between Santa Fe and Los Angeles by way of the Great Basin.⁶ The Trail entered Utah near Moab. After crossing the Green River near the modern town of Green River, it extended through Emery County and over the Wasatch Mountains through Salina Canyon to Sevier Valley. Thence it proceeded southward through Marysvale Canyon to the modern town of Spry, where it diverted westward, crossing over the mountains to Paragoonah by way of Bear Valley. From Paragoonah it proceeded southwestwardly by way of the modern towns of Parowan and Cedar City, through the Mountain Meadows to the Santa Clara River. From this point in extreme southwestern Utah the Trail continued southwestwardly to Las Vegas, Nevada, and thence to San Gabriel Mission and the Pueblo of Los Angeles.⁷ It is important to note that the trade was confined mainly to the Indians of the southern part of the state, and chiefly to those of Sevier Valley, a favorite rendezvous of the redskins and the point where the Old Spanish Trail emerged into the valley at Salina. Only occasionally did a caravan divert northward and visit the Indians of the Timpanogos or Utah Lake region. The Arze-Garcia Expedition, already noted above, is a case in point.

In 1830, an American by name of William Wolfskill led a band of trappers over the Old Spanish Trail to California. The party suffered many hardships in Castle and Sevier Valleys, but finally emerged into beautiful Utah Dixieland, which they, through their chroniclers George C. Yount and Orange Clark, enthusiastically describe. Since this is the earliest detailed description of the Indians of the southern part of the State, particularly those of the Pahvant and Sevier valleys,⁸ both traversed by the Old Spanish Trail, and

6. *Supra*, footnote 2.

7. Not all travellers California bound over the Old Spanish Trail crossed the mountains by way of Bear Valley west of Spry. No doubt some crossed through Clear Creek Canyon, the route followed by Jedediah S. Smith in 1826, others by a route still farther south. It is more accurate to say that the route west from Spry to Paragoonah by way of Bear Valley was the most travelled one.

8. The first description of any of the Indians who inhabited Utah of which we have any knowledge is that contained in the journal of Father Escalante. However,

since the aborigines of these areas constituted the tribes with whom the Spaniards plied their inhumane traffic in slaves, a portion of the illuminating report of the chroniclers is deemed important enough to insert in this narrative. After crossing the Green River, the trappers shaped their course in a southwest direction to a place then known as St. Joseph's Valley (perhaps the modern Castle Valley), which they found "to be the most desolate and forlorn dell in the world. Everything about it was repulsive and supremely awful. Unanimously they resolved to abandon so dreary a region and rather than sojourn there, forego the acquisition of any benefit in the world."⁹ Two days march, however, brought them to a place entirely the reverse of it, to which they gave the name of Pleasant Valley (Sevier).

Describing the Indians of Sevier Valley, Clark says:

These people are an anomaly—apparently the lowest species of humanity, approaching the monkey. Nothing but their straight form entitles them to the name of man. They had not a hatchet, or any instrument to cut or perforate the softest wood. One discovery they had made, or had learned it from the more intelligent savage,—they would get fire by rubbing together pieces of hard wood, but it was a long and tedious process. They have but few words and communicate chiefly by signs. They live in little clans scattered over a great extent of country. A traveller who has been among them within a few months informs us that they have now become the most adroit thieves in the world: Their food consists of occasionally a rabbit, with roots and mice, grasshoppers and insects such as flies, spiders and worms of every kind. Where nuts exist, they gather them for food. They also luxuriate and grow fat when they find a patch of clover. On many kinds of grass, they feed like cattle. They love to be covered with lice because they appropriate these for food.¹⁰

That the traffic in Indian slaves was no uncommon or isolated phenomenon along the Old Spanish Trail is attested by various authorities and accredited instances. Uncle Dick Wootton, an old frontiersman of the early nineteenth century, makes this comment: "It was no uncommon thing in

Escalante was more interested in the Indians of the Timpanogos Lake region, far off the route of the Old Spanish Trail.

9. Alter, *Utah: the Storied Domain*, I, 23-24.

10. *Idem*. Alter in turn cites the *California Historical Quarterly*, II, No. 1, April, 1923.

those days (decade of the 30's) to see a party of Mexicans in that country (Great Basin) buying children and while we were trapping there I sent a lot of peltries to Taos by a party of those same slave traders."

Thomas J. Farnum, noted western traveller who visited the territory of southern Utah in 1839, describes the Indians of this area and notes the trading activities of the Spaniards among them. The following citation appears in his illuminating book, published in London, 1843:

Between this river and the Great Salt Lake, there is a stream called Severe River, which rises in the high plateaux to the southeast of the lake, and running some considerable distance in a westerly course, terminates in its own lakes. On the banks of this river there is said to be some vegetation, as grasses, trees, and edible roots. Here live the "Piutes" and "Land Pitches," the most degraded and least intellectual Indians known to the trappers. They wear no clothing of any description—build no shelters. They eat roots, lizards, and snails. Their persons are more disgusting than those of the Hottentots. They provide nothing for future wants. . . . *These poor creatures are hunted in the spring of the year, when weak and helpless, by a certain class of men, and when taken, are fattened, carried to Santa Fé and sold as slaves during their minority.* "A likely girl" in her teens brings oftentimes £60 or £80. The males are valued less.¹²

Similar incidents are recorded by the noted Indian scout and interpreter, Daniel W. Jones. Writing in 1851, he says:

Thus we find that the people of New Mexico . . . were making annual trips, commencing with a few goods, trading on their way with either Navajoes or Utes (generally with the Navajoes) for horses, which they sold very cheap, always retaining their best ones. *These used-up horses were brought through and traded to the poorer Indians for children.* . . . This trading was continued into Lower California, where the children bought on the down trip would be traded to the Mexican-Californians for other horses, goods or cash. . . . All children bought on the return trip would be taken back to New Mexico and then sold, boys fetching on an average \$100, girls from \$150 to \$200. . . . This slave trade gave rise to the cruel wars between the native tribes of this country, from Salt Lake down to the tribes in southern Utah. Walker and his band raided on the weak tribes, taking their children

11. Conrad, Howard Lewis, *Uncle Dick Wootton, the Pioneer Frontiersman of the Rocky Mountains*, 75ff.

12. Farnum, Thomas Jefferson, "Travels in the Great Western Prairies, the Anahuac and Rocky Mountains, and in the Oregon Country," in Thwaites, Reuben Gold, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, XXVIII, 248-249.

prisoners and selling them to the Mexicans. Many of the lower classes, inhabiting the southern deserts, would sell their own children for a horse and kill and eat the horse. The Mexicans were as fully established and systematic in this trade as ever were the slavers on the seas and to them it was a very lucrative business.¹³

William J. Snow cites the journal of James G. Bleak as further evidence regarding this shameful traffic conducted by Spaniards. Mr. Bleak, sent as a Mormon missionary to labor among the Indians of southern Utah in 1854, writes:

The first day they (the missionaries) camped on the present site of Toquerville, and had an interview with the Indian chief, Toquer, they found the band very friendly. The following day the missionaries continued their journey south and camped on the Rio Virgin, opposite the present site of Washington. Here they found another camp of Indians. They were very timid. The women and children secreted themselves in the brush while the men approached the newcomers in a very cautious, hesitating manner, trembling as they shook hands with the whites. The cause of their fear it was found arose from the fact that bands of Utes and Mexicans had repeatedly made raids upon them and had taken their children to California and Mexico and sold them for slaves.¹⁴

It is interesting to note from the above testimony, that this nefarious traffic in human beings was not confined solely to the Spaniards or Mexicans, but was conducted by the different tribes of Indians themselves, the stronger tribes preying on the weaker and, if we believe the testimony of Jones, that even the celebrated chief Walker was a leader in this sordid affair. Even an occasional American trapper was sometimes known to engage in this trade. This conclusion is verified by reference to a second quotation from Farnum, who quotes his friend Dr. Lyman of Buffalo, who travelled over the Old Spanish Trail in 1841 and who observed: "The New Mexicans capture the Piutes for slaves; the neighboring Indians do the same; and even the bold and usually high handed old beaver hunter sometimes descends from his legiti-

13. Jones, Daniel W., *Forty Years Among the Indians*, 49-50. A small party of slave traders were encountered at Parowan, notice of which appears in the *Deseret News*, December 13, 1851.

14. Bleak, *Journal History of Dixie*, 20. (typewritten MS. in the Brigham Young University Library); cited by Snow, William J., "Utah Indians and Spanish Slave Trade," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, II, July, 1929, No. 3, p. 70.

*mate labor among the mountain streams to this mean traffic."*¹⁵

The Mormons became aware of this trade as soon as they entered the valley. Bancroft records:

During the winter of 1847-48, some Indian children were brought to the [old Salt Lake] fort to be sold. At first two were offered, but the settlers peremptorily refused to buy them. The Indian in charge said that the children were captured in war, and would be killed at sunset if the white men did not buy them. Thereupon they purchased one of them, and the one not sold was shot. Later, several Indians came in with two more children, using the same threat; they were bought and brought up at the expense of the settlers."¹⁶

Peter Gottfredson adds:

"Soon after the Mormons arrived in the valley, a number of Indians were encamped at Hot Springs, north of Salt Lake City. A little girl whom they had stolen from another tribe was offered for a rifle. The colonists at first refused to buy, whereupon the Indians began to torture her, declaring that they would kill her unless the rifle was forthcoming. In the face of this cruelty and threat, one of the men parted with his only gun."¹⁷

A few years later, about 1853, the noted Mormon scout and interpreter Daniel Jones was an eye-witness to the following incident which occurred near Provo, Utah:

They (Walker's band) were in the habit of raiding on the Pahutes and low tribes, taking their children prisoners and selling them. Next year when they came up and camped on the Provo bench, they had some Indian children for sale. They offered them to the Mormons who declined buying. Arapine, Walker's brother, became enraged saying that the Mormons had stopped the Mexicans from buying these children; that they had no right to do so, unless they bought them themselves. Several of us were present when he took one of these children by the

15. Farnum, Thomas Jefferson, *Life, Adventures, and Travels in California*, 312, 371, 390. On August 16, 1844, John Charles Fremont enroute to the east from California met a band of Utah Indians headed by Chief Walker. "They were journeying slowly towards the Spanish Trail to levy their annual tribute upon the Great California caravan. They were robbers of a higher order than those of the desert. They conducted their depredations with form, and under the color of trade and toll for passing through their country. Instead of attacking and killing, they affect to purchase, taking horses they like and giving something nominal in return." See Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expeditions to the Rocky Mountains in the year 1842, and to Oregon and California in the Years 1843-44*, p. 272.

16. Bancroft, Hubert Howe, *History of Utah*, 278.

17. Gottfredson, Peter, *Indian Depredations in Utah*, *passim*; Gottfredson quotes from the *Journal of Solomon Kimball*, 15-16.

heels and dashed its brains out on the hard ground, after which he threw the body toward us, telling us we had no hearts, or we would have bought it and saved its life. This was a strange argument, but it was the argument of an enraged savage. I never heard of any successful attempts to buy children afterwards by the Mexicans. If done at all it was secretly.¹⁸

But the slave trade did continue to exist, at least until 1860, for in that year, Indian agent Garland H. Hurt officially reported:

"So vigorously is it prosecuted that scarcely one-half of the Py-eed children are permitted to grow up in the band; and a large majority of those being males, this and other practices are tending to depopulate their bands very rapidly.¹⁹

The people of Utah were profoundly shocked by the knowledge of these inhumane practices and Brigham Young at once determined to put an end to the whole sordid business. He therefore issued a proclamation, dated April 23, 1853, warning the people of the southern settlements and dispatching a detachment of thirty men "to apprehend all such strolling Mexicans and keep them in custody until further warned."²⁰

Over a year before, on January 31, 1852, the Utah territorial legislature had attempted to solve the problem by passing a law prohibiting the slave trade entirely, but this the Mexicans with complete indifference had evidently ignored. The law legalized the enforced apprenticeship of Indian children, but "only for the purpose of inducing the brethren to purchase those who would otherwise have been sold or abandoned by their parents."²¹

The immediate occasion for the above legislation was the arrival of a party under Pedro León in Manti, Sanpete Valley, attempting to trade horses for Indian children.²² León held a license signed by Governor James S. Calhoun and

18. Jones, *Forty Years Among the Indians*, 53.

19. Report of Garland H. Hurt in Simpson, Captain George, *Explorations Across the Great Basin of Utah*, Appendix O.

20. Snow, *op. cit.*, 71-72. See also Bancroft, *op. cit.*, 475-476; also Whitney, *History of Utah*, I, 512.

21. *Acts, Resolutions and Memorials* (Salt Lake City, 1855); also *Utah State Historical Quarterly*, II, July, 1929, No. 3, pp. 85-86.

22. *The Deseret News*, November 15, 1851, carried an announcement and editorial about this incident.

dated Santa Fe, August 14, 1851. The arrival of León and his party caused considerable concern and later eight of the group, including León, were arrested and tried before the Justice of the Peace at Manti. Subsequently they came before Judge Zerubbabel Snow in the First District Court at Salt Lake City.

"This was quite a noted case," says Jones. "I was employed as interpreter. George A. Smith defended the prisoners, and Colonel Blair prosecuted with great wisdom and tact, he knowing all about the Mexican character, having been in the Texan War. A good deal of prejudice and bitter feeling was manifested toward the Mexicans. Governor Young, seeing this used all his influence that they might have a fair trial and the law be vindicated in a spirit of justice and not in the spirit of prosecution. The defense made by the Mexicans was that the Indians had stolen a lot of horses from them and they had followed and overtaken them. On coming to camp, they found that the Indians had killed and eaten the horses. The only remuneration they could get was to take some children which the Indians offered in payment, saying they did not mean to break their promise. This defense had some weight, whether true or not."²³

The court decided against the Mexicans and a squaw and eight children were set free. The Mexicans were ordered to leave the territory. They did so but not without avenging themselves by stirring up the savages against the settlers. The resultant Walker War, 1853-1854, can be traced directly to this episode.

It appears perfectly evident from all the facts herewith presented that that part of the Great Basin south of the Sevier River traversed by the Old Spanish Trail was frequently visited during the first half of the nineteenth century by unscrupulous Spanish and Mexican traders who acquired Indian children whom they sold into slavery; that some of the Indians themselves and occasionally also a few avaricious American trappers engaged in this sordid business; and that the trade did not cease until the Mormon colonists passed legislation prohibiting it, and furthermore, the attempt to regulate the trade resulted only in further ingratiating both Spaniard and Indian and therefore served as a pretext for future wars.

23. Jones, *op. cit.*, 50; see also Whitney, *op. cit.*, I, 510-511.