

Juanita Brooks and Fawn Brodie—Sisters in Mormon Dissent

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THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE Utah State Historical Society held on 23 September 1967 at the University of Utah brought together for the first time, in the same place, and at the same time three distinguished Utah-born scholars who were also well-known dissenters in the field of Utah/Mormon history. The first of these was Juanita Brooks, author of *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* and the controversial biography *John Doyle Lee: Zealot-Pioneer Builder-Scapegoat*, who was present by virtue of her position as a member of the Utah State Board of History. Also present was Dale L. Morgan, staff member of the Bancroft Library and author of several books and of three important definitive essays focusing on dissenting factions within Mormonism that emerged in the wake of Joseph Smith's 1844 death. Morgan had been invited from California, to deliver the featured keynote address. The third scholar, who, like Morgan, had travelled from California was Fawn M. Brodie, author of the highly controversial *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* for which she had been excommunicated from the Mormon church in 1946. Brodie had been invited to receive the Utah Historical Society's most prestigious honor—its Fellow Award.

Brodie made clear her role as a leading dissenter of Mormonism's past in what she termed her "two-and-one-half minute" acceptance speech. This "honor [had] a special quality," she noted, because it represented "a tribute to the right to dissent about the past." Brodie in discussing the past explained: "I never return to Utah without being forcibly reminded of the overwhelming significance of the past in this area." She then quoted the noted British philosopher Bertrand Russell: "The past is an awful God,

though he gives life almost the whole of its haunting beauty . . . [including] the continuity of life; the weight of tradition, the great eternal process of youth and age and death . . . Here the past is everywhere with us." Then Brodie quoted distinguished American author William Faulkner: "The Past is not dead; it is not even past." With clear personal allusions Brodie elaborated:

Certainly it is true that the way a person brought up in . . . [the Great Basin] . . . chooses to reckon with the past—either to wrestle with it, to abominate it, to submit to it, or to adore it and try to convert others to its overwhelming significance—has major consequences for his life. It determines the quality of his intellectual life; it very largely determines the nature of his friends; and has important consequences whether for good or ill upon his piece [sic] of mind.¹

Brodie's comments on dissent seemed to allude to the crucial dissenting roles assumed by both Brodie and Juanita Brooks relative to Mormonism's past—albeit in starkly different ways. Indeed, the role of both women as dissenters of Mormonism's past was nurtured by a close relationship that evolved during the course of some thirty years.

Juanita Brooks and Fawn Brodie came from similar backgrounds and confronted strikingly similar experiences. Juanita, the older of the two, was born on 15 January 1898 in the small, rural Mormon community of Bunkerville, Nevada.² The second of nine children born to Henry Leavitt and Mary Hafen, she descended from Mormon pioneer stock. Her paternal grandfather, Dudley Leavitt, the family patriarch, was an imposing figure who had been a practicing polygamist with five wives and forty-eight children. Juanita herself was a bright, eager student, despite her rustic rural environment. She graduated from high school in 1916 and then enrolled in a "normal" or teacher training course in Bunkerville where she developed her initial interest in creative writing. Despite her talent, Juanita was painfully concerned about her physical appearance, developing an inferiority complex. She was sensitive about her "slight, ungainly body, protruding, crooked teeth; [her] disproportionate nose, [and] unruly hair."³

Juanita's early religious views were "brash and contentious." She

1. "Acceptance Speech of Fawn McKay Brodie, Utah Historical Society, Annual Meeting, 23 Sept. 1967, University of Utah," original in Fawn M. Brodie papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

2. The information for this biographical sketch is largely drawn from the definitive work of Levi S. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988).

3. *Ibid.*, 29.

became, in the words of her biographer Levi Peterson, "a Sunday School dissenter" regarded by her more devout Mormon neighbors "as verging on apostasy." But Juanita held her "nonconformity" in check and did not let it drive her from the church. Instead, she took to heart the advice of a favorite uncle who urged her to promote change from within the faith. Juanita's uncle drew an analogy with a cowboy driving his herd.

A cowboy who wants to turn a stampeding herd can ride neither in it nor counter to it; he must ride at the edge. Happy sounds are generally better than cursing . . . but there are times when he must maybe swear a little and swing a whip or lariat to round in a stray or turn the leaders. So don't lose yourself, and don't ride away and desert the outfit. Ride the edge of the herd and be alert, but know your directions, and call out loud and clear. Chances are, you won't make any difference, but on the other hand you just might.⁴

After teaching school first in Bunkerville and then in nearby Mesquite, Juanita met and married Ernest Pulsipher, a devout Latter-day Saint and returned missionary. Pulsipher, like Juanita, descended from pioneer Mormon stock. The newlyweds became the parents of a son, Leonard Ernest, born in September 1921. However, tragedy struck when her husband died the following January of a long, chronic ailment, apparently cancer, leaving Juanita a widowed mother at age twenty-three. Firmly committed to supporting herself and infant son, Juanita returned to school, attending first Dixie College in St. George and then Brigham Young University where she graduated with a degree in English in 1925. She then secured a teaching position in English at her Alma Mater, Dixie College. Juanita also pursued her love for creative writing and in 1926 her first published work, a poem entitled "Sunrise from the Top of Mount Timp," was published in the Mormon church periodical the *Improvement Era*.⁵

After teaching for three years at Dixie College, she took a sabbatical to complete a master's degree in English at Columbia University. She lived for a year, 1929-30, in New York City in an environment totally different from the small-town setting of Utah's Dixie. Thus Juanita experienced somewhat of a "culture shock." But she adjusted. According to Levi Peterson: "[Juanita] experienced the Outside [world] . . . first hand and . . . discovered that she had a tolerance and even a sympathy for it. Finally,

4. *Ibid.*, 29.

5. Juanita Brooks, "Sunrise from the Top of Mount Timp," *Improvement Era* 29 (Sept. 1926): 1124.

however, she had no compulsion to hew [or subsume] her identity to its dimensions." Thus after completing her master's, Juanita was "happy" to return home to St. George and her teaching position at Dixie College concluding that "The big city [of New York] is all right . . . but I do not belong there."⁶ Three years later in 1933 she met and married Will Brooks, a widower, and Washington County sheriff, who at fifty-two was seventeen years older than Juanita and had three children of his own. During the next five years, the new Mrs. Brooks bore her husband an additional four children so that by the time she reached her fortieth birthday she had responsibility for a large family of eight children, four of whom were under the age of five.

Despite her extensive domestic responsibilities, Brooks steadfastly pursued her developing passion for writing and historical research. She, moreover, achieved a degree of national recognition. In 1934 *Harper's* magazine published an essay that she had written entitled "A Close-up of Polygamy," focusing on plural marriage within her own family. Seven years later, in 1941, the same periodical published her "The Water's In!"—an article describing the scarcity of water in her childhood hometown of Bunkerville.⁷ Besides her own writing Brooks became involved in collecting and preserving pioneer diaries kept by early local residents. In this activity, she was encouraged by the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. This institution processed the diaries and provided Brooks with a financial stipend. Brooks's activities as a writer and collector of early Mormon diaries brought her into contact with Dale L. Morgan, who, at the time, was the supervisor for the Utah Writers' Project under the Works Progress Administration. In time Morgan became both a close friend and valued mentor.

More important as Brooks closely examined the pioneer history of southern Utah, she found herself "tantalized" by the mystery surrounding the Mountain Meadows Massacre. This incident involved the 1857 killing of the members of an obnoxious, disruptive non-Mormon immigrant party passing through southern Utah, nearly one hundred individuals in all, including women and children—an act committed by a group of native Indians aided and abetted by local Mormons, who in its wake, attempted to cover up their involvement. This bloody act was not openly discussed by local residents. Thus after almost a century Brooks "repeatedly . . . encountered guilt and grief over the massacre."⁸ In 1940 she presented her first paper on the subject to the Utah Academy of Arts, Sciences, and

6. Peterson, 79-80.

7. Juanita Brooks, "A Close-up of Polygamy," *Harper's* 168 (Feb. 1934): 299-307; "The Water's In!" *Harper's* 182 (May 1941): 101-103.

8. Peterson, 114.

Letters. She pursued her research on this highly controversial topic in an indirect manner through her work on a biography of Jacob Hamblin. A legendary local figure, Hamblin was considered Mormonism's so-called "Apostle to the Indians." But he was reportedly present at the massacre itself. In 1942 Brooks applied for an Alfred A. Knopf fellowship to pursue the completion of her biography of Hamblin. Despite her fascination with the extremely controversial topic, Brooks remained a believing, active Latter-day Saint, serving at various times on the stake board of the Mutual Improvement Association and as stake Relief Society president. Her commitment to Mormonism notwithstanding, Brooks allowed herself to enjoy an occasional cup of coffee.

Meanwhile in Huntsville, Utah, another small, rural Mormon community located some 400 miles to the north, Fawn McKay was coming of age. Born on 15 September 1915 to Thomas Evans McKay and Fawn Brimhall, Fawn, like Juanita, was descended from pioneer Mormon stock.⁹ Fawn's maternal grandfather, George H. Brimhall, like Juanita's paternal grandfather was a practicing polygamist, with at least two (and possibly three) wives by whom he fathered fifteen children.¹⁰ But in contrast to Juanita's more humble origins, Fawn's family was more genteel and patrician. Fawn's grandfather Brimhall served for twenty-one years as president of Brigham Young University. Her uncle, David O. McKay, was a member of the Mormon church's ruling elite—the Council of Twelve Apostles—throughout her growing-up years; and her father served as president of the Ogden Stake during this same period. Fawn, while just a youngster, demonstrated early talent as a writer in a manner similar to Juanita. In 1925, at the age of ten, one of Fawn's poems entitled "Just a Minute Mother" was published in the Mormon church youth periodical the *Juvenile Instructor*—representing the first of her published works.¹¹ In school Fawn was precocious and did so well in her academic studies that she was advanced three grades. By the time she graduated from high school in 1930, she was just fourteen.

In addition to her precocity, Fawn was beautiful and statuesque, commanding the awe and attention of all who met her. Fawn, however, looked upon herself in a different light, developing like Brooks an inferiority complex about her physical appearance. Fawn was "painfully shy

9. Much of the information for this biographical sketch is drawn from my "Fawn Brodie and Her Quest for Independence," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22 (Summer 1989): 79-95; and "Fawn M. Brodie, Mormondom's Lost Generation, and *No Man Knows My History*," *Journal of Mormon History* 16 (1990): 11-23.

10. Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1982), 24-28.

11. Fawn McKay, "Just a Minute, Mother," *Juvenile Instructor* 60 (Nov. 1925): 627.

about her height," 5'10", which she reached as a young adolescent, making her taller than all of the girls and most of the boys her age. Her older sister recalled that as Fawn kept growing her "tears would flow" because "in [Fawn's] eyes tall girls were not popular."¹² This, however, did not stop Fawn from dating. She was attracted to and "fell passionately in love" with Dilworth Jensen, who, like Fawn, was bright and articulate. They dated each other on a steady basis over the next six years and even talked of marriage.¹³ From 1930 to 1932, Fawn attended Weber College, at the time, a two-year institution operated by the Mormon church. Meanwhile, Fawn's relationship with Dilworth continued apace even though they were separated during the two years that he served a mission for the Mormon church in Germany during the early 1930s.

Fawn's situation drastically changed following her graduation from Weber as she continued her studies at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. During the years 1932-34 the sixteen year-old coed was living on her own for the first time. Her views concerning Mormonism also changed. "I was devout until I went to the University of Utah." Fawn "began to move . . . out of the parochialism of the Mormon community."¹⁴ Her doubts were nurtured by some of her teachers, the literature to which she was exposed, and the general academic environment at the University of Utah—an institution considered the "center of anticlericalism" concerning things Mormon. As she later recalled, "It happened very quietly."¹⁵ She "began looking into the history of the Church . . . particularly the founder Joseph Smith."¹⁶ Despite her growing doubts, Fawn returned to Ogden, accepting a teaching position in English at Weber College, her alma mater, following her graduation in 1934.

After teaching for just one year, Fawn left Utah in 1935 to pursue graduate studies in the East, following the course taken by Brooks some years before. But in contrast to Juanita, who returned to Utah upon completing her graduate studies, Fawn's departure was permanent. She left behind not only Utah but also her Mormon beliefs. She later recalled: "the confining aspects of the Mormon religion dropped off within a few weeks [after arriving in Chicago] . . . It was like taking off a hot coat in the

12. Marshall Berges, "A Talk with Fawn Brodie," *National Retired Teachers Association Journal*, July-Aug. 1977, 8; Flora McKay Crawford, "Flora on Fawn," 4, unpublished recollections, n.d., typescript, copy in my possession.

13. Letter to Elizabeth Jensen Shafter, 16 Oct. 1980, copy in my possession; letter to Newell G. Bringhurst, 24 Jan. 1988.

14. "Biography of Fawn McKay Brodie," interview with Shirley E. Stephenson, 30 Nov. 1975, 3, Oral History Collection, Fullerton State University, Fullerton, California.

15. Fawn M. Brodie, "It Happened Very Quietly," in *Remembering, The University of Utah*, ed. Elizabeth Haglugg (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1981), 85-95.

16. Crawford, "Flora on Fawn," 5.

summertime. The sense of liberation I had at the University of Chicago was enormously exhilarating. I felt very quickly that I could never go back to the old life, and I never did."¹⁷ While at Chicago Fawn completely severed her relationship with Dilworth Jensen after meeting Bernard Brodie, a fellow graduate student from Chicago who came from a Latvian-Jewish immigrant background.¹⁸ She married Brodie, after a whirlwind courtship of just six weeks, on 25 August 1936—the same day that she received her M.A. in English.

Soon thereafter the new Mrs. Brodie began the historical research on what would ultimately be her biography of Joseph Smith. Much of her research was done in the library at the University of Chicago where the Brodies remained until 1940 when Bernard completed work for his Ph.D. in international relations. A year later they moved to Hanover, New Hampshire, where Bernard accepted a teaching position at Dartmouth College. A year after that, in 1942, the first of their three children, Richard, was born. Meanwhile, the young housewife and mother continued to work on her Joseph Smith biography. In 1943 Brodie applied for an Alfred A. Knopf fellowship in biography. Brodie's application was like that submitted the previous year by Juanita Brooks to do Jacob Hamblin. But unlike Brooks, who failed to secure a grant, Brodie was awarded a fellowship which carried a stipend of \$2,500.¹⁹ Brodie was further encouraged in her research by her "favorite uncle," Dean Brimhall, her mother's younger brother. Well-educated with a Ph.D. in psychology from Columbia University, Brimhall, like Brodie, was a "skeptic," "rebel," freethinker, and critic of Mormon doctrine and practice.²⁰ Also encouraging Brodie was Dale L. Morgan whom she met in 1943 after the Brodies moved to Washington, D.C., following the outbreak of World War II and Bernard's enlistment as an officer in Naval Intelligence. Morgan, like Brodie, was not an active, practicing Latter-day Saint and, like her, was a religious skeptic. Morgan, despite being completely deaf as the result of a childhood illness, had established himself as a respected regional scholar. He had by this time published two major books, *Utah: A Guide to the State* (1941) and *The Humboldt: Highroad of the*

17. "Biography of Fawn McKay Brodie," 3.

18. For two good overviews of Bernard Brodie in terms of his life and activities, see Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York, 1983); and Gregg Herken, *Councils of War* (New York, 1987). For a discussion of Brodie in terms of his ideas, see Barry H. Steiner, *Bernard Brodie and the Foundations of American Nuclear Strategy* (Lawrence, KS, 1991).

19. M. Rugoff, "Biography Fellowship Evaluation," 17 Mar. 1943, original in Alfred A. Knopf papers, Harry Ranson Humanities Research Center, University of Texas.

20. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 6, 20 Jan. 1945, originals in Morgan papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

West (1943).²¹ Thus Brodie and Morgan soon became fast friends, with Morgan assuming the role of chief critic and mentor to the fledgling author. This was a relationship similar to that which Morgan had earlier developed with Juanita Brooks. Indeed, it was Morgan who apparently encouraged the initial contact between Brooks and Brodie and acted as an intermediary early on as their relationship evolved.

Brodie and Brooks met for the first time during the summer of 1943 when Brodie travelled to Salt Lake City to do research for her Joseph Smith biography.²² Thus began what would become a mutually supportive relationship despite the sharply differing views that each woman had concerning basic Mormon beliefs and doctrines. Brodie expressed her admiration for the perseverance and productivity of Brooks in light of the obstacles that the St. George author had overcome. "Her story makes my own life seem all sweetness and light," Brodie told Morgan, adding, "Except for a certain amount of family bitterness over" her marriage to Bernard, she "never had [had] any real trouble."²³ On another occasion Brodie praised "the incredible Juanita" for her ability to write "with so many small fry under foot," a feat that Brodie would find "quite impossible."²⁴ In turn, Brooks, sensitive to the controversial nature of Brodie's Joseph Smith research, expressed admiration for Brodie's "courage," offering to provide the author whatever useful information that she came across in her own research.²⁵ Shortly thereafter, Brooks obtained and passed on to Brodie "an autobiography of one of Joseph [Smith's] wives—Mary Rollins Lightner."²⁶ When *No Man Knows My History* was finally published in late 1945, Brodie specifically thanked her fellow writer, characterizing Brooks as "notably generous in allowing me to examine the fruits of [her] own excellent research in early Mormon documents."²⁷

Meanwhile, Brodie reciprocated, assisting Brooks in her own efforts. Brodie took an active interest in Brooks's proposed biography on Jacob Hamblin. Brooks had continued work on Hamblin despite her failure to secure a Knopf fellowship. In February 1944 she sent Brodie a typescript

21. For a good overview of Dale L. Morgan in terms of his life and activities, see John Phillip Walker, ed., *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986).

22. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 9 Sept. 1943, original in Morgan papers.

23. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 22 June 1944, original in Morgan papers.

24. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 12 July 1946, original in Morgan papers.

25. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, 7 Oct. 1943, quoted in Peterson, 141.

26. Fawn M. Brodie to Claire Noall, 8 Apr. 1944, original in Claire Noall papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

27. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), xi.

draft of the first four chapters of her Hamblin manuscript. Brodie then approached Datus Smith, director of Princeton University Press, who was also Brodie's personal friend, discussing with him the feasibility of publication. Brodie herself also read and critically evaluated Brooks's manuscript. In remarks shared with Dale Morgan (who also had read Brooks's work) Brodie indicated that the author needed to do a significant amount of revision before her manuscript would be ready for publication. Brodie was particularly critical of the first two chapters. "They are not too well-written, are far too pious, and contribute little if anything to the story." In Brodie's opinion the two chapters "could never be published anywhere" outside of the *Improvement Era*. As for form, Brodie suggested that the two chapters "be severely condensed, with the spotlight focused on Jacob's personal problems rather than upon the whole [history] of the Great Basin." On the positive side, Brodie had a much higher regard for the second two chapters, describing them as "fresh, vigorous, and exciting." Continuing, Brodie noted:

Once [Brooks] gets Jacob [Hamblin] to southern Utah she is a different writer. If she could bring more sharply into focus the contrasts between the Mormon and Piute cultures . . . the importance of Jacob Hamblin's story would [be] even further heightened. My feeling is that Juanita must forget the Church altogether and let herself go before she can make this book into what it should be.²⁸

Brooks, however, suspended work on her Hamblin biography, for reasons that are not completely clear.²⁹ Instead, Brooks, prompted by the suggestion of Dale Morgan, concentrated on her own autobiography—a work ultimately published as *Quicksand and Cactus*.³⁰ This task occupied Brooks's major energies over the course of the next year. Again Brodie, along with Morgan, had opportunity to evaluate Brooks's work. In April 1945 Brodie expressed her opinions, passing them on through Morgan. Brodie told Morgan, "There is substance here for a fine and moving book.

28. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 17 Feb. 1944, original in Morgan papers.

29. Brooks's work was published thirty-five years later under the title *Jacob Hamblin: Mormon Apostle to the Indians* (Salt Lake City, 1980).

30. Peterson notes that Brooks "suddenly decided upon a new direction in her writing. It derived from Morgan's casual observation that she was a living remnant of the frontier . . . For Morgan, her connection with the frontier was nothing to be ashamed of. She should, he insistently replied, write her autobiography" (Peterson, 143). Morgan was apparently more blunt in revealing to Brodie his motives for encouraging Brooks to pursue her autobiography. Brodie referred to Morgan's "conviction that it would be better for Jacob to be her second book" (Brodie to Morgan, 17 Feb. 1944, original in Morgan papers).

She tells some wonderful stories . . ." Brodie then offered her suggestions for improvement. Pointing to the specific geographic setting, Brodie noted that "the reader is not sufficiently oriented . . . to the Southern Utah-Nevada desert area." She added: "We need a more vivid picture of the desert—with its color, heat, and terrifying isolation, with the forlorn little villages scattered along the road." "Even more important," Brodie continued, "we need more of Juanita in the story." Brodie suggested that: "[Brooks] should shed more of her inhibitions. Talking about one's own adolescence is difficult, and has to be done deftly. But there is too great a gap between her childhood and marriage. Moreover, the story of her marriage and early bereavement (which carries great dramatic punch) should certainly be expanded." Then touching on her own special interest in Mormonism's peculiar institution Brodie also suggested, "I'd like to hear much more . . . about the polygamous relationship" within Brooks's own family involving Brooks's grandfather, Dudley Leavett and his wives. Turning to a careful evaluation of Brooks's general prose style, Brodie expressed her "feeling . . . that perhaps the most serious weakness in the book is the careless writing." Despite her basic criticisms, Brodie told Morgan that in passing on her "negative comments, please make it clear [to Brooks] that they must not discourage her." And then in a revealing personal note, Brodie told Morgan that as she read through the manuscript: "I was struck again and again with the affinity of Bunkerville and Huntsville. Many of Juanita's childhood experiences parallel my own, even though geographically no two settings could be more unlike."³¹ Morgan passed on Brodie's comments to Brooks, along with his own and those of a third individual, Darel McConkey—a mutual friend of both Brooks and Morgan.³² However, Brooks suspended, for the time being, work on *Quicksand and Cactus*, concentrating instead on the controversial Mountain Meadows Massacre.³³

Brooks, moreover, responded to a different type of controversy, the fire storm in Mormondom that developed in response to Brodie's *No Man Knows My History*, published in late 1945. Brooks wrote Morgan, outlining her own carefully thought-out evaluation of Brodie's biography. On the positive side she agreed with Morgan that it "needed to be done." "I think

31. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale Morgan [n.d.], original in Juanita Brooks papers, Utah State Historical Society.

32. Dale L. Morgan to Juanita Brooks, 26 Apr. 1945, original in Brooks papers.

33. It appears that Brooks's shift of focus was largely encouraged by Alfred A. Knopf who in April 1945 invited her to submit a manuscript on the Mountain Meadows Massacre for publication Consideration. Knopf had heard about her work on this topic from Robert Glass Cleland of the Huntington Library. In addition, by this time two other publishers had rejected her "Quicksand and Cactus" manuscript for publication. As a result Brooks had developed a "distaste for the [latter] project" (Peterson, 155, 158).

it is scholarly; I think it is literary." Brooks then continued: "I think that it sets up new points from which to judge Joseph Smith. It certainly shows careful and patient research. I like especially her work on backgrounds and social conditions and current interests." But at the same time she questioned Brodie's central thesis:

I do not believe that [Joseph Smith] was a conscious fraud and imposter. The things that were real to him may not seem so to [Brodie] or to you or to most other people, but I think they must have been to him. I have felt that it was his own deep and sincere convictions that attracted and held his following. For a fraud, he inspired loyalties too deep in too many. Certainly he had something. Men, catching the spark from him, were willing to sacrifice too much to further his cause.

Elaborating on this point Brooks continued: "I believe that it is possible for human beings to tap the great source of all good—to contact God direct, if you will. I believe that there were times, rare perhaps, when Joseph Smith did that. I believe that it was those times that held his people to him in spite of all his human blunderings and frailties and mistakes."

To illustrate her point, she cited her own spiritual experiences for believing in Joseph Smith's spiritual experiences. She described specifically the miraculous appearance, many years before, of a strange little man who had blessed and comforted her dying first husband Ernest Pulsipher. Brooks also questioned Brodie's interpretations derived from contemporary, controversial statements made by Smith, noting that "different people put entirely different interpretations even on simple statements. So with some of Fawn's material, I didn't always arrive at the same conclusions from her evidence that she did." Then pointing to the basic dilemma confronting any biographer Brooks noted that it is not "humanly possible for anyone to collect all the evidence" adding that "all the written evidence must be, at best, only a fragment of a human life." At the same time Brooks was quick to confess that her own "background makes me slow to think that I can analyze Joseph Smith." Then pointing specifically to her own research Brooks noted that "the [pioneer] journals and diaries that I have found certainly give respect for a man who could inspire such devotion and loyalty. To me [Joseph Smith] seems to have a dimension that is quite un-get-at-able."³⁴

Morgan responded to Brooks's thoughtful critique with a detailed, carefully written analysis of his own. It opened with a very positive observation: "If every member of the church united your feeling for the Mormon way of life with your intellectual objectivity and reasonableness,

34. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, 9 Dec. 1945, original in Brooks papers.

no religion on earth would rival Mormonism, and the Kingdom of God would have a fair chance of early realization." Morgan made this statement despite his basic agreement with Brodie's "naturalistic interpretation" of Joseph Smith coupled with his own strongly professed "atheist views," that is, his stated belief that there was "absolutely no necessity to postulate the existence of God as explanation of anything whatsoever." With this "point of view on God" he asserted that he was "incapable of accepting the claims of Joseph Smith and the Mormons" and therefore stood "on one side of a Philosophical Great Divide" whereas Brooks with her basic Mormon beliefs would "always be on the other side of that [same] Great Divide." In conclusion, Morgan stated that despite such differences, he respected Brooks's "point of view . . . very highly." He stated his intention to send Brodie a copy of Brooks' letter "so that she also may read it" in order "to broaden her [own] viewpoint."³⁵

Brodie, however, responded less positively to Brooks. Brodie described to Morgan her own direct correspondence with the St. George author as being much more limited, consisting of "an extremely guarded thank-you note." As a result, Brodie "immediately sensed" that her biography had "shocked" Brooks "profoundly." Then from the perspective of her own experiences, Brodie explained: "I think that [Brooks] must have felt a little bit like I did when I read that scurrilous *WIVES OF THE PROPHET* (by Hoffman Birney was it?) when I first arrived in Chicago. I was reasonably emancipated by then, too, but the book made me wild. No, no, these things simply can't be, I said." Brodie then turned to the specific observations that Brooks had made to Morgan noting that she had found them "extremely illuminating." According to Brodie, "the best evidence for the uneasiness in Juanita's soul is the fact that she felt the necessity of sitting down and 'bearing her testimony'" to Morgan—a person "whose judgement she respected." With more than a little sarcasm Brodie then observed that Brooks "had to return to the spiritual manifestations of her youth for strength. Isn't it incredible how those miracle tales pop up again and again?" A principal reason for Brooks's failure to subscribe to Brodie's own "naturalistic view" involved the limits of Brooks's environment. According to Brodie:

I think Juanita suffers, more than anything else, from the isolation of living in St. George. Were she in Salt Lake or Provo, where [Mormon] anti-clericalism is really rampant, she would find many to talk to who would help her clarify her own thinking. As it is she seems to have only Maurine [Whipple]! And no one is better calculated to make one appreciate the homely Mormon

35. Dale L. Morgan to Juanita Brooks, 15 Dec. 1945, original in Juanita Brooks papers.

virtues than that gal. I'd prefer the Sunday School superintendent any-day.³⁶

In response, Morgan felt compelled to defend Brooks, despite his basic agreement with Brodie's "naturalistic thesis." He told Brodie that she [Brodie] had "somewhat misconstrued [Brooks's] letter to me" noting that Brooks "did not make a special point of writing" in the way that Brodie perceived. "When [Brooks] is moved to communicate on any subject," Morgan continued, "she sits down and writes me like that" noting that Brooks's willingness to open up to him concerning her wide range of feelings intellectual and otherwise provides her "with a kind of intellectual companionship, if you get what I mean." Morgan then pointedly observed that: "Your own comments on Juanita's case interested me for the insight they afforded into your own personality as presently constituted. You seem to find it much more necessary to place things on a clearly rational basis than I do." He then continued with probing insight:

I have an idea that you haven't come full circle yet in liberating yourself from the church. You have an intellectual but not yet an emotional objectivity about Mormonism. You are still in certain [respects in] a mood of rebellion and you sometimes give vent to a sharp intellectual scorn for the Mormon way of life which practically speaking is an intolerance for it. I suspect that you won't begin to have really generous feelings, a live-and-let live philosophy, until you have finished disentangling yourself from the religion.³⁷

Indeed, Brooks herself defended Brodie in the face of what she considered unwarranted attacks from within the Mormon community. Thus Brooks affirmed anew her role as dissenter.

Initial church attacks on Brodie's biography came in the *Deseret News*, which published a series of articles, actually speeches made by church leaders in the April 1946 LDS general conference affirming the divine mission of Joseph Smith while assailing those who would question the character and motives of Mormonism's founder. Specifically, church president George Albert Smith asserted, "Many have belittled Joseph Smith but those who have, will be forgotten in the remains of Mother Earth and the odor of their infamy will ever be with them."³⁸ Brooks in writing to Morgan noted that she had "been amused to see what Fawn's book has done to the

36. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 22 Dec. 1945, original in Morgan papers.

37. Dale L. Morgan to Fawn M. Brodie, 7 Jan. 1946, in Walker, *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism*, 117-18.

38. *Deseret News*, 8 Apr. 1946.

Sunday issue of the *Deseret News*. "President Smith and others, she noted, have denounced "authors who had set out to destroy" Joseph Smith without directly referring to Brodie or her book. "But they certainly let the people know what would happen to the likes of her."³⁹ Brooks responded more negatively the following month to an unsigned critique entitled "Appraisal of the so-called Brodie book" which appeared in the "Church News" section of the *Deseret News*. Directly assailing Brodie's book as "wholly atheistic" the "Appraisal" claimed that the author's "intense atheism" both colored and determined "the approach and . . . content of her book." Brodie's lack of objectivity, it continued, was influenced by the fact that her husband was Jewish.⁴⁰ Brooks responded to the *Deseret News* "Appraisal" condemning it as a "vitriolic attack" which made her "embarrassed and ashamed" making "it very hard for" herself as "a person who would like to be loyal to the church."⁴¹ Brooks responded even more directly to Brigham Young University professor Hugh Nibley's famous rebuttal, *No Ma'am That's Not History*. Brooks wrote Nibley as "a good member of the church" who was "not defending" Brodie's book per se. Brooks frankly told Nibley that he, along with other members of the church, had "been entirely too hysterical about" the book giving "it an importance greater than it deserves." But at the same time, Brooks asserted that Brodie's biography was "good for the church and good for us all, if only to stimulate further study of this man who was the founder of our faith." Brooks then pointed out a number of errors and misstatements made by Nibley, noting that "in our zeal to answer Mrs. Brodie, we make some statements almost as far fetched as hers." Brooks then carefully noted that despite her own dissent, she still believed in the divine mission of Joseph Smith. She thus concluded with the rather earthy observation that: "Joseph Smith stands as untouched by Mrs. Brodie's attack as his monument does by the pecking of sparrows."⁴² Brooks also reacted negatively to the church's drastic action of excommunicating Brodie in early June 1946. Writing Dale Morgan, she stated cryptically and with some sarcasm: "Now that [the church] has done its duty on that point, [it] can feel much more righteous, I imagine."⁴³

Despite Brodie's excommunication, Brooks did not shun the ex-Mormon. Brooks maintained contact with Brodie, as she pushed ahead with her own controversial study of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Indeed, Brooks feared similar repercussions for her own work. Brooks confessed

39. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, 15 Apr. 1946, original in Brooks papers.

40. *Deseret News*, 11 May 1946.

41. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, 19 May 1946, original in Brooks papers.

42. Juanita Brooks to Hugh Nibley, 7 Nov. 1946, copy of original in Brooks papers.

43. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, 25 June 1946, quoted in Peterson, 177-78.

to Morgan in a June 1946 letter: "I consider [the Mountain Meadows Massacre study] to be my final bow to the Mormon audience for I feel sure that as soon as [it] is finished I'll be OUT" of the church.⁴⁴ And in a letter written two months later to Brodie, Brooks said, "I'll not be surprised to be cut off right below the ears when this [Mountain Meadows Massacre] thing is finished."⁴⁵ Brooks, however, remained undeterred as indicated in Brodie's own observations to her uncle Dean Brimhall: "As to what the church may say or do about" Brooks and her Mountain Meadows Massacre, the St. George author "was just not going to worry" about it. But Brodie did confess that she herself "would be most interested in the Church's reaction" to Brooks's work. "Juanita is loved and respected in St. George and does a tremendous lot of church work, though she keeps her head marvelously above all the silly dogma."⁴⁶ Brodie could clearly identify with Brooks's situation as a fledgling author dealing with a controversial aspect of Mormon church history.

Brodie, moreover, could also identify with Brooks's difficulty at gaining access to sensitive historical materials, specifically Mountain Meadows Massacre affidavits in LDS church archives. Brooks made several attempts, all unsuccessful, in getting approval to examine these documents from Brodie's own uncle, David O. McKay. Indeed, Brooks was not even allowed to meet personally with McKay.⁴⁷ In response to this failure, Brodie sarcastically noted to Morgan: "it doesn't surprise me." Then alluding to her own background and experiences Brodie explained: "It is a well established tradition in the McKay family that avoiding trouble is the easiest way to handle it." All of the McKays "hate fights, squabbles, and arguments, and are all too often willing to tolerate error and injustice if it means avoiding unpleasantness." Brodie concluded on a personal note: "That is why [the McKays] all find me inexplicable."⁴⁸

Despite such obstacles, Brooks finally completed her Mountain Meadows Massacre book in April 1950. Morgan commented to Brodie that its appearance would "be the acid test of the Church reaction to its history. . . ." Morgan, however, did not believe that Brooks would suffer that fate of excommunication that had befallen Brodie some four years before. He made this point to Brodie in comparing Brooks's study with Brodie's *No Man Knows My History*. Brodie's book, he noted, was "automatically intolerable [to church leaders] because it tampers with the Church's legend of its origins" whereas "Juanita's book" deals "with a later period where

44. *Ibid.*, 178.

45. Juanita Brooks to Fawn M. Brodie, 25 Sept. 1946, original in Brodie papers.

46. Fawn M. Brodie to Dean Brimhall, 7 May 1947, original in Brimhall papers.

47. Dale L. Morgan to Fawn Brodie, 28 Oct. 1945, original in Morgan papers.

48. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 13 July 1946, original in Morgan papers.

there is a greater margin of tolerance" and "written by a respected church member" even though it critically examines "a chapter in its history [that] the Church is aching to forget."⁴⁹ Brodie responded in an extremely positive fashion to the actual publication of *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, praising her fellow author, "I can't tell you how much I admire the delicacy, dispassionateness, and understatement with which you have handled [the] potentially lurid and sensational" issue of the Mountain Meadows Massacre.⁵⁰

In the years following publication of *Mountain Meadows Massacre* interactions between Brooks and Brodie continued, but became less frequent. In 1951 Brodie sent Brooks a copy of Eric Hoffer's controversial best-selling book, *The True Believer*. Brooks found it "very challenging" as an "analysis of mass movements" and of the "portrait of the people who are a part of them."⁵¹ Hoffer's analysis seemed particularly timely in that Brooks saw parallels between Hoffer's "true believers" and certain prominent Mormons who reacted negatively to her *Mountain Meadows Massacre*. Brooks pointed specifically to William H. Reeder, former president of the LDS Eastern States Mission and prominent Ogden, Utah, judge, who had expressed great disappointment "regarding [Brooks's] approach and what she had published in the book." Reeder was "definitely of the opinion that Juanita Brooks' book [could] be classed with [Vardis] Fisher, [Maurine] Whipple, and [Fawn] Brodie."⁵² Brooks told Morgan that Hoffer's *The True Believer* had helped her "to understand Brother Reeder and . . . others [in the church] who do not want new ideas, who fear any mental disturbance, [and] who prefer the established legends to any new versions."⁵³ To Brodie, Brooks stated: "You were right—these are the kind of people we both know." Then referring to her own situation and the fallout from *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, Brooks explained to Brodie: "Well, I haven't been formally excommunicated yet. Around here, my crime is either overlooked or ignored." Brooks then went on to describe the short-lived interest shown by Warner Brothers in making the story of the Mountain Meadows Massacre into a movie. Although this project never came to pass, the St. George author described her "brief bout with the movies" as "fruitful of one thing

49. Dale L. Morgan to Fawn M. Brodie, 17 Mar. 1950; original in Morgan papers.

50. Fawn M. Brodie to Juanita Brooks, 9 Dec. 1950, quoted in Peterson, 209.

51. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, 28 Sept. 1951, original in Morgan papers.

52. Milton R. Hunter to Frank H. Jonas, 2 Feb. 1951, original in Morgan papers. This was the same William H. Reeder who, as president of the Eastern States Mission, had supervised excommunication proceedings against Brodie in 1946 following publication of *No Man Knows My History*.

53. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, 28 Sept. 1951.

at least. It forced [church leaders] to admit my existence and to admit, also that [her *Mountain Meadows Massacre*] had been written."⁵⁴

Two years later, while visiting Utah, Brodie approached Brooks about writing an essay on Utah's colorful, controversial incumbent governor, J. Bracken Lee, for *The Reporter*—a New York-based periodical for which both Fawn and her husband Bernard had previously written essays. J. Bracken Lee was an ultra-conservative Republican whose policies of extreme retrenchment in education had caused Brooks, a partisan Democrat, to actively campaign against him in 1948 when he was first elected and again in 1952 when he was reelected to a second term. Brooks, according to Brodie, "was elated by the idea" of writing such an article.⁵⁵ Even though Brooks produced an unpublished fragment entitled "Governor Lee and the Schools of Utah," her impressions of Lee were apparently never published in *The Reporter* or elsewhere.⁵⁶ Brooks, however, did pursue her scholarly research in exploring the life and career of another Lee, one closer to home and directly implicated in the Mountain Meadows Massacre—John D. Lee. In 1955 Brooks completed editing Lee's journals. Brodie expressed her delight at the "fine review" given Brooks's edited work in *Time* magazine in the wake of publication.⁵⁷

Four years later, in 1959, Brodie had the opportunity to visit once more with her St. George friend. Brodie noted that Brooks had recently moved into "the old red rock sandstone house her husband was born in" having added "a magnificent room overlooking the temple and the vast sweep of mesas to the South and East." "It was good to see" Brooks "living in such comfort and beauty." Brodie took particular interest in the progress that Brooks was making on her biography of John D. Lee which Brodie described as "almost finished." In line with that research, Brodie "greatly enjoyed hearing" about Brooks's most recent discoveries, in particular, some "interesting evidence that the \$4,000 in gold coin carried by the [Fancher Party] emigrants finally ended up in the lap of the church." According to Brodie, Brooks had "a photostat of a letter from someone who expressed 'great relief' at getting rid of the mass of the coin after keeping it for so long." "The evidence is a little tenuous," Brodie continued, "but quite convincing when put together with everything else."⁵⁸

Two years later, in 1961, during another Brodie visit to Utah, Brooks told Brodie of a more immediate controversy involving Lee. Brooks indicated in her biography that Lee, originally excommunicated from the

54. Juanita Brooks to Fawn M. Brodie, 18 Jan. 1952.

55. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 29 July 1953, original in Morgan papers.

56. As indicated by Peterson, 228, 459.

57. Fawn M. Brodie to Dean Brimhall, 20 Dec. 1955, original in Brimhall papers.

58. Fawn M. Brodie to Dean Brimhall, 1 Sept. 1959, original in Brimhall papers.

Mormon church in the aftermath of his involvement in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, had recently been reinstated "into the church with all official privileges." When Brooks found out about this reinstatement as "done recently in a ceremony in the temple" she decided to include the information in her forthcoming biography. But when church leaders heard about Brooks's decision to discuss the fact of Lee's reinstatement they were, in Brodie's words, "incensed." David O. McKay himself demanded that Brooks remove this information from her work prior to publication, arguing that Lee's reinstatement "was a secret ceremony" the facts of which "should not be made public." But "actually word had gone out officially [from the church] to all of [Lee's] heirs describing the reinstatement." Then according to Brodie's account:

When Juanita insisted that she would keep the fact in the book, she was told that David O. [McKay] would revoke the whole process and presumably cast poor John D. Lee back into limbo again. Devout descendants of Lee in the St. George area [pleaded] with Juanita to delete the item and spare their celebrated ancestor this sad fate.

Ultimately, Brooks agreed to a compromise whereby the first edition of her biography would not include the objectionable information. But a second edition, published immediately after the first, would. Brodie wryly noted that since both editions were for all intents and purposes "being published simultaneously" she would "certainly . . . buy" the second.⁵⁹ In conclusion Brodie then editorialized to her friend Dale Morgan, "This is the kind of story that makes the Mormons endlessly fascinating."⁶⁰ And to her uncle Dean Brimhall, Brodie was even more blunt: "I think the whole story is utterly delightful. [The fact that] this kind of thing can go on and be taken seriously by educated people . . . is just beyond belief."⁶¹

Two years later, in 1963, Brodie wrote Brooks updating her concerning her own current scholarship, in particular, her ongoing research for a biography on Richard Burton, noted nineteenth-century British explorer and writer, whose unorthodox, rebellious life and behavior attracted Brodie. In describing Burton to Brooks, Brodie characterized him "in many ways as colorful and baffling as Joseph Smith" and at the same time "less melancholy and tragic than [Thaddeus] Stevens"—the leader of Radical

59. Fawn M. Brodie to Dean Brimhall, 23 Aug. 1961, 11 Sept. 1961, originals in Brimhall papers. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 19 Oct. 1961, original in Morgan papers.

60. Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 19 Oct. 1961.

61. Fawn M. Brodie to Dean Brimhall, 11 Sept. 1961.

Reconstruction who had been the subject of her second biography, published in 1959.⁶²

The next occasion during which the two women had the opportunity to get together was when Brodie travelled to Salt Lake City in September 1967 to receive her Fellow Award from the Utah Historical Society. Morgan, in a letter to Brodie, reflected on this event, expressing his pleasure at having been present with both Brodie and Brooks "in the same room at the same time: for the first time." Morgan then told Brodie that Brooks "like yourself [is] one of my favorite persons." In specific terms, Morgan characterized Brooks as "energetic . . . indestructible, [and] considerate beyond all measure."⁶³ Three years later, in October 1970, all three individuals got together, once again, when Fawn Brodie returned to Salt Lake City to present a lecture entitled "Can We Manipulate the Past?"—a historical critique on the now-defunct Mormon church practice of excluding blacks from ordination to the Mormon priesthood. She gave her presentation to a standing-room-only crowd of over 500 in the Hotel Utah Lafayette Ballroom.⁶⁴

Six months later, a renewal of correspondence between Brooks and Brodie was prompted by the unfortunate death of Dale Morgan following a short bout with cancer. He was just fifty-six, and both women reflected on his sudden death while at the same time discussing the help and encouragement that he had provided. Brodie noted "how very much indebted to him" she "was for [the] important criticism that" he had given which "helped shape" her Joseph Smith biography. "I was astonished," she told Brooks, "at the maturity and perception [that] he showed even as a very young man." And then Brodie explained her grief: "His death is sad in so many ways that I don't like to think about."⁶⁵ In response, Brooks, like Brodie, acknowledged the help that Morgan had provided describing him as "so perceptive, and understanding and accurate." Brooks, like Brodie, poignantly manifested her grief: "I have long since ceased trying to figure out the WHY'S of the Universe. I can only accept these tragedies with what grace I can muster."⁶⁶

Fawn Brodie and Juanita Brooks corresponded on one final occasion five years later, in 1976. Their correspondence was prompted by the

62. Fawn M. Brodie to Juanita Brooks, 3 Feb. 1963, original in Brooks papers.

63. Dale L. Morgan to Fawn M. Brodie, 5 Oct. 1967, copy in Morgan papers.

64. For a discussion of this event and the activities of Fawn Brodie relative to the controversy surrounding the place of blacks within Mormonism, see Newell G. Bringhurst, "Fawn M. Brodie as a Critic of Mormonism's Policy toward Blacks—A Historiographical Reassessment," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 11 (1991): 34-46.

65. Fawn M. Brodie to Juanita Brooks, 25 Apr. 1971, original in Brooks papers.

66. Juanita Brooks to Fawn M. Brodie, 4 May 1971, original Brooks papers.

publication of a new work on the *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, by William Wise. This work had plagiarized much of its material from Brooks's earlier *Mountain Meadows Massacre*. As such, Wise's volume incurred Brodie's wrath. Brodie found this volume's "claims to originality of research somewhat deceptive." Brodie wrote a letter of indignation to the publisher, Thomas Y. Crowell, in which she asserted that Wise had drawn "enormous quantities of material" from Brooks's earlier definitive work without properly acknowledging it. Not only had Wise drawn "most of the material in his volume" from Brooks but then had given her "the back of his hand" by accusing her of defending "the [Mormon] Church's reputation at any cost." Brodie dismissed Wise's accusation, pointing instead to Brooks's role as both the premier scholar on the Mountain Meadows Massacre and as a dissenting Mormon:

Juanita Brooks was the first serious scholar to amass all the available evidence concerning the massacre from historical archives and to risk—as a Mormon—expulsion from the Mormon Church by publishing the data as she found it. She is compassionate but not protective. She protects no one. She even describes [in her own book] her failure to get material which had been promised her, but which had been sent instead to the church archives in Salt Lake City, and her failure to get permission to see the material, despite repeated efforts.

Brodie contrasted Brooks's careful, thorough scholarship with that employed by Wise which she characterized as "careless, and notably ungenerous, even somewhat deceptive, about [its] indebtedness to Mrs. Brooks." Brodie's overall evaluation dismissed the objectionable book as "sensational, hostile, and angry."⁶⁷ Brodie then forwarded a copy of her critical letter to Brooks with an accompanying note evaluating Wise's work in even more blunt terms as "dishonest" and "a bad book."⁶⁸ In response, Brooks wrote back thanking Brodie for writing such a "generous and scholarly letter." "It was generous to me, and seething to" both the author and publisher adding that in no way could they "refute it."⁶⁹

In Brooks's reply to Brodie, however, it was clear that the years were beginning to take their toll on the seventy-eight-year-old St. George author, as evidenced by the stilted, rambling nature of the letter and in the numerous typos it contained. Brooks herself seemed to acknowledge as much confessing to Brodie: "I am growing old at too fast a gait. I sometimes

67. Fawn M. Brodie to Cynthia Vartan, 18 Nov. 1976, copy in Utah State Historical Society Archives.

68. Fawn M. Brodie to Juanita Brooks, 18 Nov. 1976, original in Brooks papers.

69. Juanita Brooks to Fawn M. Brodie, 29 Dec. 1976, original in Brooks papers.

think I should lock up this machine, and perhaps talk into a proper device and have someone pick it up on paper."⁷⁰ Despite such problems, Brooks resumed work on her autobiography, *Quicksand and Cactus*, prompted and encouraged by the University of Utah Press, which was pushing for its long-delayed publication. The press moreover enlisted the services of Fawn Brodie, asking her to write a foreword. Both Brooks and Brodie looked forward with enthusiasm to their joint efforts on this project.⁷¹ However, for various reasons, their joint effort never came to pass even though *Quicksand and Cactus* itself was ultimately published in 1982.⁷² In the meantime, Brooks's physical and mental health continued to decline, as she suffered from Alzheimer's disease. In 1985 she was placed in a St. George nursing home where she remained until her death in August 1989. As for Brodie, she had died some eight years before, in January 1981. Brodie, like her mentor, Morgan, succumbed following a short bout with cancer, just as she completed her fifth and final biography—*Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character*.⁷³

The relationship between Juanita Brooks and Fawn Brodie, twentieth-century Mormonism's two most noted female dissenters, was noteworthy for several reasons. First, it is significant that such a relationship developed in the first place, and indeed flourished, given the sharply differing views the two women held on basic Mormon beliefs and doctrine. But such a relationship did develop due in large part to the fact that each recognized the other as a sister in Mormon dissent—albeit of different types. Also nurturing this relationship was a sense of common heritage and parallel experience in overcoming many of the same obstacles. Each had grown up as a bright, articulate Mormon female coming of age in a male-dominated society both in the Mormon community and the larger American society. Each found herself adapting to the conventional, prevalent role expected of married women during the mid-twentieth century: first and foremost a wife and mother and then a teacher, scholar, and writer only as time and energy would permit.

A second noteworthy significance of the relationship between Brooks

70. *Ibid.*

71. This according to information in Peterson, 412, and from a telephone conversation of Newell Bringhurst with Trudy McMurrin, 4 May 1992.

72. Indeed, *Quicksand and Cactus* was not published until 1982—a year following the death of Brodie and not published by the University of Utah Press. Instead it was published by Howe Brothers of Salt Lake City. Hence these are the major reasons why a foreword by Fawn Brodie was not included.

73. For a discussion of Brodie's final years and the circumstances surrounding the completion of her Richard Nixon biography, see Newell G. Bringhurst, "Fawn Brodie's Richard Nixon: The Making of a Controversial Biography," *California History* 70 (Winter 1991/92): 379-91.

and Brodie involves the ability of each woman to successfully fulfill two concurrent, sometimes conflicting roles—a “traditional role” as wife/mother and a second “career role” as teacher/writer. For Brooks this meant a career of teaching at Dixie College over the course of many years combined with writing twelve books and editing four others which has caused observers to label her “the dean of Utah Historians.”⁷⁴ For Brodie, success was evident in her own career as a professor of history for ten years at the University of California at Los Angeles combined with her authorship of five major biographies on five prominent individuals: Richard Nixon, Thomas Jefferson, Richard Burton, Thaddeus Stevens, as well as Joseph Smith. As a result, Brodie gained for herself a national reputation in the field of biography. The ability of each woman to successfully fulfill a “traditional” role of wife/mother in combination with a career in teaching/writing foreshadowed the multiple roles pursued by women in the 1990s.

A third important significance of the relationship between Brooks and Brodie is in the contribution each woman made to the cause of dissent within twentieth-century Mormonism. However, it should be noted that certain high officials within the church vigorously disputed the merits of that cause. In particular, Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of the Seventy condemned the efforts of Brooks with the explanation: “I can’t understand why Juanita Brooks . . . who claims to be a good Mormon, should spend [her] time digging into stuff like the Mountain Meadows Massacre when there are so many wonderful achievements that have taken place in Utah that could be written upon.” Hunter dismissed the Mountain Meadows Massacre as “just a small incident in Utah history” noting that “such small incidents took place on all frontiers in American history” and are “parts of history which should be forgotten.” Hunter then drew comparisons between the work of Brooks and Brodie: “I suppose Mrs. Brooks has done like Fawn Brodie did” in rehashing “all of the old corruption instead of finding anything new.” He then concluded, “I went through Fawn Brodie’s [*No Man Knows My History*] very carefully and wrote a review” noting that this was “exactly what [Brodie] did under the pretense of new documents.”⁷⁵

Whatever the merits of Hunter’s assertions, it is clear that he along with other observers considered Brooks and Brodie to be sisters in Mormon dissent. Also clear is the fact that neither woman acted alone. Crucial in the efforts of each woman was the role played by their common friend and mentor Dale L. Morgan. Indeed, Brooks, Brodie, as well as Morgan were

74. This according to an inscribed plaque honoring Brooks on display in the foyer of the Marriott Hotel in Salt Lake City, as noted by Peterson, 411.

75. Milton R. Hunter to Frank H. Jonas, 2 Feb. 1951.

all part of a larger regional literary movement that had its genesis in the late 1930s and came to full flower during the 1940s and 1950s. Also a part of this movement were such Mormon-born writers as Vardis Fisher, Paul Bailey, Maurine Whipple, Virginia Sorensen, and Samuel W. Taylor. Also involved were two notable non-Mormons with Utah roots, Bernard DeVoto and Wallace Stegner. These writers have been labeled by Edward A. Geary as "Mormondom's Lost Generation" because they tended to be alienated from their social-cultural environment.⁷⁶ This was certainly the case for Brodie whose role as a dissenter evolved into open and complete rebellion whereby she rejected basic Mormon beliefs and doctrines. Despite her own rejection, Brodie's dissent, according to Sterling M. McMurrin, helped to usher in "A new climate of liberation" insofar as Mormon letters were concerned: "Because of *No Man Knows My History*, Mormon history produced by Mormon scholars has moved toward more openness, objectivity and honesty."⁷⁷

In contrast to Brodie's, Brooks's dissent was more moderate, directed not against basic Mormon beliefs or institutions but instead against what she felt to be both official and unofficial Mormon "coverup" of certain embarrassing events, such as the Mountain Meadows Massacre and of particular controversial individuals such as John D. Lee. As a result, Brooks, according to Levi Peterson, helped to make "the collective mind of Mormonism . . . more liberal and more at peace with itself than it might otherwise be." Specifically, "The Mountain Meadows massacre is no longer a repressed, subliminal disturbance in the Mormon psyche." In a larger sense, according to Peterson:

Juanita [Brooks] helped make Mormondom a little less suspicious about nonconformity in general. Voicing her contrary opinions unequivocally, she confronted scolding apostles with a courageous assertion of her faithfulness. The fame of her loyal dissent spread widely, and covert protesters of many varieties took heart.⁷⁸

Clearly, both Juanita Brooks and Fawn Brodie stood as significant sisters in Mormon dissent whose contributions to Mormon historical scholarship and impact on the cause of dissent within the larger Mormon community continues to be felt to the present.

76. For a discussion of these writers, see Edward A. Geary, "Mormondom's Lost Generation: The Novelist of the 1940s," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Fall 1977). Also see Bringhurst, "Fawn M. Brodie, 'Mormondom's Lost Generation,' and *No Man Knows My History*."

77. Sterling M. McMurrin, "A New Climate of Liberation: A Tribute to Fawn McKay Brodie, 1915-1981," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Spring 1981): 73-76.

78. Peterson, 422-23.