

# Madeline McQuown, Dale Morgan, and the Great Unfinished Brigham Young Biography

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SHORTLY AFTER COMPLETING *THE DEVIL DRIVES: A Life of Sir Richard Burton* in 1967, Fawn M. Brodie wrote to her friend Dale Morgan confessing that she had “been periodically haunted by the desire to do a biography of Brigham Young.” She mentioned that she had been encouraged by “many people” and “more than one publisher.”<sup>1</sup> Knowing that Morgan’s close friend, Madeline R. McQuown, had been working for a number of years on her own Brigham Young biography, Brodie stated that she had stayed away from Young. However, since “so many years [had] gone by with no” McQuown-written biography, Brodie asked Morgan to “frankly” tell her what the status was of McQuown’s long-awaited book.<sup>2</sup>

Morgan quickly responded that McQuown’s manuscript was “substantially complete” and “so massive” that “it may have to be a two-volume work.” He reported that McQuown had “done an amazing research job” and that at least one publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, had expressed interest.<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding Morgan’s praise of McQuown’s work and discouragement of Brodie’s interest in Brigham Young, Brodie persisted, explaining that W.W. Norton wanted her to write a biography. Her Utah

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1. Brodie to Morgan, 14 Aug. 1967, in Newell G. Bringhurst, “Fawn M. Brodie After *No Man Knows My History*: A Continuing Fascination for the Latter-day Saints and Mormon History,” 14-15, privately circulated, copy in my possession.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, 15.

friends and acquaintances were similarly supportive. Mormon entrepreneur and philanthropist O. C. Tanner even offered her \$10,000 up front to do the research and produce a manuscript on the early Mormon prophet. Brodie told Morgan, "[I]f I thought [McQuown's] book would be delayed for another two years I would be quite tempted to go ahead with it." Morgan again strongly encouraged her "not to write on Brigham Young in light of 'what Madeline McQuown has done.'" Eventually Brodie told Tanner and other supporters that she would not write about Brigham Young in light of McQuown's anticipated biography.<sup>4</sup>

In the end Brodie gave up the idea of writing a biography on Brigham Young and chose, instead, Thomas Jefferson with her award-winning, controversial *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (1974). McQuown, on the other hand, continued to promise the impending publication of *The King of Deseret: The Life of Brigham Young*. Up to the time of her death in 1975, McQuown claimed that she was within days of finishing her definitive biography of Young.<sup>5</sup>

Only after her death did people discover that McQuown's promised biography was little more than a rough manuscript of about six chapters and 157 pages. For years McQuown had claimed to be working tirelessly on her manuscript. More than once both she and Dale Morgan had claimed that her health had been affected by the intense work she was performing on her 1,000-page manuscript. Indeed, the great Brigham Young biography became, in reality, the great unfinished Brigham Young biography.<sup>6</sup>

In analyzing a possible charade of this proportion, the first question to address is who was Madeline R. McQuown and why didn't she ever finish the Young biography? Just as important is: Why would a scholar of Dale Morgan's stature be party to such an apparent deception? And, finally, what were the consequences of the unfinished biography and the amount of misinformation which surrounded its supposed progress?

Madeline McQuown was born Madeline Isadora Reeder in Ogden, Utah, on 31 March 1906.<sup>7</sup> She was the eldest child of Francis Hubbard

4. *Ibid.*, 16; and telephone interview with Everett L. Cooley, 13 June 1996.

5. Telephone interview with Everett Cooley, 13 June 1996. Brodie's biography of Jefferson, probably more than any of her other biographies, placed her on the national stage of the study of history due to her subject matter and the controversial nature of her work.

6. Gary F. Novak, "'The Most Convenient Form of Error': Dale Morgan on Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review of Books* 8 (1996), 1:132-33. For more detail on the manuscript, see Madeline R. McQuown Papers, Bx 8, fds 1-8, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

7. The 1930 LDS church census, Ogden 20th Ward, Ogden (Utah) Stake, lists Madeline's name as Magdalena Isadore Reeder. However, most records give her name as Madeline. All LDS ward records and U.S. censuses used in this essay are located in the Family History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. There are no page numbers, enumeration districts, etc.; censuses are arranged alphabetically by surname.

Hemming Reeder (1886-1936) and Madeline Mary Chatelain (1887-1956). Francis was of early Utah pioneer heritage. He was a descendant of Francis Hubbard Reeder (1830-1902), a staunch member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a polygamist with four wives.<sup>8</sup>

On her mother's side, Madeline also descended from early pioneer settlers. Her grandparents were Peter Edward Chatelain (1861-1936) and Phoebe Isadore Allen (1862-1918). Allen was the daughter of Elihu Moroni Allen (1836-1912) who, with his father, Elihu, arrived in Utah in 1847.<sup>9</sup>

Both the Reeder and Chatelain families were prominent in the LDS church and the local community. Several members of the two families were in lesser ecclesiastical positions. Madeline's uncle, William Henry Reeder, Jr. (1884-1961), was a municipal judge in Ogden for a number of years. He later served as mission president in the New England Mission. Incidentally, as mission president, he oversaw Fawn Brodie's excommunication in 1946.<sup>10</sup>

Francis H. H. Reeder, or Frank, as he was known, on the other hand, was not as successful as his brother, nor was he as involved in LDS church activities. Baptized in 1894, Frank eventually became an elder in the church. In 1905 he married Mary Madeline Chatelain but appears to have had difficulty establishing himself financially, since he moved around from one residence to another, and even boarded sometimes with his parents for a thirty-five year period. During this time he was a stoker for the Ogden Gas, Light and Fuel Company and then was an electrician for a number of years. In an effort to better his financial and social circumstances, Frank, like his elder brother, eventually be-

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8. LDS 1925 and 1930 censuses, Ogden 13th and 20th wards, Ogden (Utah) Stake; LDS Deceased Members File; Ogden 2nd Ward Membership Records, 32; "Madeline C. Reeder," *Deseret Evening News*, 27 June 1956; "Rites Wednesday for Contractor: S.L. Builder Dies at Age of 76 From Heart Attack," *Deseret News*, 16 Jan. 1933; and LDS Ancestral File, Family History Library. The elder Francis settled first in Cache Valley and later moved to Ogden.

9. LDS 1914, 1930, and 1935 censuses, Layton Ward, Davis (Utah) Stake, and Ogden 20th Ward, Ogden Stake; and LDS Ancestral File.

10. LDS Ancestral File; LDS Deceased Members File; "Ogden Man Will Head New England Mission," *Deseret News*, 24 Oct. 1941; "William Reeder, Ex-Judge in Ogden, Dies," *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, 26 Mar. 1961; "Judge William H. Reeder," *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, 27 Mar. 1961; and "Judge Reeder Rites Today," *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, 30 Mar. 1961. Reeder was president of the Mount Ogden Stake and served on the board of directors of the Thomas Dee (now McKay-Dee) Hospital. He also served on the This Is The Place Monument Committee. Madeline McQuown hated her uncle and refused to have anything to do with him.

came a lawyer.<sup>11</sup>

Reeder remembered her childhood as sad, even painful. She experienced a difficult relationship with her mother and viewed the beginnings of her troubles with the birth of her younger sister, Jeannette Elizabeth Reeder (b. 1908). She complained that her sister “was paraded before the family and family friends as a beautiful child and I postured and sought ways to attract people, adults to me, only to be further shunted away with ridicule.” She later described herself as having “golden curls and violet eyes” that looked out from early pictures “with the looks of pleading found in the unloved child.”<sup>12</sup>

While Madeline Reeder’s criticism is harshest for her mother, whom she viewed with contempt, she also attacked her father for disliking children and showing “marked and brutal” favoritism to her brother, Francis William Reeder (b. 1912), the only boy in the family. This treatment by her parents was, she felt, the result of “the unthinking cruelty of adults.” Reeder tried to escape what she perceived to be an unhappy life by living for extended periods of time with her grandmother Chatelain in the Ogden Valley and by immersing herself in poetry and reading.<sup>13</sup>

Reeder later remembered her father as a fun-loving man with a sense of humor and a sardonic smile. According to Madeline, her mother was much more somber and religious and pushed her father to be more than he was. Reeder revealed that her mother was probably unhappy because “it was not possible for her to make as good a life for herself” as she wanted. Reeder vaguely stated that her mother “wanted the wrong things as people always do. And, she got what she wanted and, alas, has paid for it.”<sup>14</sup>

In this statement Reeder may have been referring to the fact that her parents’ unhappy marriage later ended in divorce. Apparently Frank was an alcoholic which caused much conflict and bitterness in the family. By the time of their divorce, Frank had become disaffected from the LDS

11. LDS church 1914 and 1925 censuses; Layton Ward, Davis Stake, and Ogden 13th Ward, Ogden Stake, records; *R.L. Polk & Sons Ogden City Directory* for 1890-1926; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *United States Census of Population for 1920, Ogden, Weber, Utah*. While Frank Reeder was listed as boarding at 1159 21st Street as early as 1906, he moved to at least five different places during the next fourteen years, including a three-year residence in nearby Layton; but in 1920 he was not only living at the 1159 residence but was listed as owning it outright. Obviously his financial circumstances had improved. It also appears that while Frank spent most of his working career as an electrician, he tried a two-to-three-year stint as a tailor’s helper. However, Madeline liked to remember him in his last career choice—a lawyer.

12. McQuown Papers, Bx 3, fd 2. Whether Madeline’s description of her childhood is accurate can only be surmised. What is important is that Madeline obviously believed that it was true which obviously influenced her world view.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, Bx 1, fd 3. In 1952 Madeline Chatelain Reeder moved into the Ogden 10th Ward, North Weber (Utah) Stake, where she remained until her death in 1956.

church or, as an intimate friend of Madeline explained, "real anti-Mormon" in his views.<sup>15</sup> Eventually he moved his law practice first to Reno, Nevada, and later to San Francisco where he died in 1936.<sup>16</sup> Mary M. Reeder lived another twenty years as a widow. By the time of her mother's death, Madeline Reeder had been married twice and was intimately associated with Dale Morgan.

Lowell Dale Morgan was born on 18 December 1914 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the first of four children born to James Lowell Morgan (1894-1913) and Emily May Holmes (1894-1969). Morgan's heritage was made up of early Mormon pioneers on both sides of his family. Moreover, his father's side boasted a connection to the early Mormon hierarchy, as his great-grandfather was Mormon apostle Orson Pratt.<sup>17</sup>

In 1920 Dale's father died after an appendicitis operation, leaving behind a young widow and four little children. Emily Holmes never remarried. She taught school to provide for the family and dedicated her life to caring for them. Her care was especially needed in 1929, when, at the onset of puberty, young Dale suffered from spinal meningitis which caused him to go completely deaf.<sup>18</sup>

The results of his deafness were devastating. Although his mother worked tirelessly with him to help his transition into society as a silent participant, Morgan retreated into a world of books and studies where he felt safe and in control. He later explained to his cousin, Jerry Bleak, "I felt guilty and inferior and betrayed by my life in a great many ways. ... I shrank from the conspicuity of my disability; I could not or would not establish myself socially."<sup>19</sup>

15. Interview conducted by Everett L. Cooley and Della Dye with Gerald Finin, 24 Feb. 1976, [24], Marriott Library.

16. I checked the Reno, Nevada, LDS branch records, Family History Library, for the time that Frank Reeder lived there and could find no mention of him. I assume that by that time he was completely inactive.

17. Salt Lake City 22nd Ward records, Family History Library; LDS church censuses of 1914, 1925, 1930, and 1935; and LDS Ancestral File. Although he later went by Dale L. Morgan, Morgan's entry into the ward records, as well as four different church censuses, listed his name as Lowell Dale Morgan.

18. Salt Lake City 22nd Ward records, and Richard Saunders, "The Strange Mixture of Intellect": A Social History of Dale L. Morgan, 1933-42," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Winter 1995): 40.

19. Morgan to Jerry Bleak, 5 Oct. 1938, in Saunders, 40. Morgan's experience was typical of what other pre-pubescent and pubescent children go through after such a traumatic experience. Lenore C. Terr, "Childhood Traumas: An Outline and Overview," *American Journal of Psychology* 148 (Jan. 1991): 10-19, argues that children who have experienced a traumatic experience which physically disfigures or disables them feel shame, guilt, and anger and transfer these negative feelings onto people around them. Thus childhood trauma may become a mechanism controlling the child's future perceptions of the world. Scott C. Bunce, Randy J. Larsen, and Christopher Peterson go even farther in their article "Life after Trauma: Personality and Daily Life Experiences of Traumatized People," *Journal of Personality* 63 (June 1995): 165-83. They suggest that traumatized individuals report a higher level of neuroticism as well as more cognitive disturbances, trait anxiety, and lower self-esteem than nontraumatized individuals. They also experience a higher level of interpersonal withdrawal.

Morgan's inability to socialize had a telling effect on his social and religious activities. While he had been actively involved both before his illness, he shrank into inactivity in both areas of his life after suffering from deafness. Sometime during his high school and college years, Morgan went "through a period of adjustment" in which he eventually lost his faith in God and the LDS church. He "could no longer believe the things [he] had formerly believed" and did "not see the necessity of God in the scheme of things." Even so, by 1935 Morgan had, with the encouragement of his mother, advanced to the priesthood office of elder in the church.<sup>20</sup>

Like most other young men his age, Morgan was fascinated by his and others' sexuality. However, as a result of his deafness, Morgan was apparently unable to adequately express his sexual thoughts and desires. Consequently, he lived in a world of sexual fantasy, frustration, guilt, and despair. He later recalled:

My trouble was not that I was undersexed but that I had no adequate channels to express what I am. My isolation together with the virginity which it enforced or directed had a hell of a lot to do with this. I couldn't write my book [a novel about his experiences growing up] as I originally planned because of this very predominance of the sexual in me. My whole life from the year I returned to school in 1930 [after his fight with spinal meningitis and the onset of deafness] has revolved around this powerful focus. Everything hinged on this—my studies, my interests in the movies—everything. ... But I was lousy with inhibitions. God, I was truly lousy with them. ... (for a period of weeks, to be quite frank, I felt as tho I had no sexual organs at all).<sup>21</sup>

As Morgan progressed in his studies, he still experienced social and sexual frustration which he expressed in semi-autobiographical short stories and by drawing nudes in pastel.<sup>22</sup> It was during his time at the University of Utah that he met Madeline Reeder and her fiance, Jarvis Thurston.

Morgan began to spend quite a bit of time with the couple, visiting with Madeline about literature and playing chess with Jarvis. While Mor-

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20. John Phillip Walker, *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence & A New History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 28, and LDS church censuses of 1930 and 1935. While Morgan claimed to have lost faith in God, he still went through the outward motions of religious observances.

21. Morgan to McQuown, no date, McQuown Papers, Bx 3, fd 3.

22. For a discussion of Morgan's sexual frustration and interest in drawing nudes, see Novak's "The Most Convenient Form of Error," 128-29. A revealing short story by Morgan is titled "Virgin in the Night," which, although about a young, virginal woman, is nonetheless revealing in symbolism and form. McQuown Papers, Bx 10, fd 1. It should be noted that Morgan majored in commercial art at the University of Utah. Obviously, drawing the human body would have been a necessary part of his studies in art.

gan's friendship for Jarvis was genuine and strong, he fell in love with Jarvis's wife, Madeline. (The two had married shortly after Morgan met them.) What had begun as an appreciation for an above-average intellect developed into a burning desire which appears to have been reciprocated for a while. Sam Weller, well-known Salt Lake City book-seller, believes that Reeder introduced Morgan to sex.<sup>23</sup> Morgan's correspondence suggests that the romance, at least in its early stages, was mutual.

While Morgan's social situation may have improved with the introduction of Madeline Reeder into his life, it was still a complex pattern of uncertainty, intense devotion, infatuation, pain, and ultimately rejection. Morgan appears not only to have turned his sexual fascinations but indeed his whole sense of purpose toward Madeline Reeder.<sup>24</sup>

At one point he wrote to Reeder, "My whole life has been a love letter addressed to you." When Madeline and Jarvis began to have problems, Morgan encouraged her to turn to him and had hoped they would marry. He was sorely disappointed when Reeder turned instead to Thurston's dearest friend, Thoms E. (Tom) McQuown (1916-70), a distant cousin of Morgan through the Pratt family. The Thurstons divorced in late 1940 and Madeline married McQuown in early 1941.<sup>25</sup>

Notwithstanding Madeline's marriage to her new husband, Morgan was not deterred. He continued to visit her and to write her letters expressing his love and desire. In 1944 Morgan wrote about a new dress he had bought for McQuown and commented, "I ... would greatly enjoy clothing you entirely in things of my own selection from the skin out." He later wrote, "Damn it, why aren't you somewhere around, so I can buy a flower for you when the fancy takes me—or even grow one for you that we can enjoy together?"<sup>26</sup>

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23. Telephone interview with Sam Weller, 13 June 1996. Morgan's and McQuown's relationship was intimate enough for Morgan to paint a nude portrait of Madeline which Weller owned for a number of years before selling it to an art collector.

24. In an undated note written to Madeline, Morgan explained that in his "struggle for some kind of valid sexual life" he had been unable to offer his mother much physical tenderness because he had "always been aware of her sexually." He continued by explaining, "It is very intricate. It is no Oedipus complex, either; it is at once more simple and more complex. ... the sexual element in a person's life, its power and force, has no necessary relation to the forms of its expression." McQuown Papers, Bx 3, fd 3. Emerging from a cloud of what he may have perceived as incestuous emotions into what was probably his first love and sexual relationship, Morgan (socially and sexually immature) reacted to his love for Madeline with school-boy enthusiasm.

25. McQuown Papers, Bx 2, fd 9, and interview with Jarvis Thurston by Newell G. Bringham, 15 May 1989. Thomas Edward McQuown (1916-70) was born in Garfield, Utah, to Edward Lloyd McQuown (b. 1887) and LaRene King (1884-1946). He was the great-grandson of Parley P. Pratt and came from a practicing Mormon family. At the time of his affair and eventual marriage with Reeder, McQuown worked at the railroad yards in Ogden and on mail trains between Utah and California.

26. In Walker, 55, 73.

Even though Morgan helped McQuown and her husband move to California, ostensibly so that he could be closer to research facilities such as the Bancroft Library where Morgan worked, Morgan appears to have realized that his passion for her was in vain. As early as 1940 Morgan wrote to McQuown, stating:

Sometime you may be enabled to read the things I write to myself each night in default of someone to talk to, and perhaps you will understand some of these things that evidently you do not understand now. I know that all the omissions are not contempt in you, and not indifference, but I cannot always believe this. There are so many gaps in all the things you do and say, gaps you seem not even aware of, and yet of which I am painfully aware. I ask nothing of you, Madeline; you know that I cannot; but all the things you fail to do or say speak a language of their own. I have a constant struggle with these omissions, which are not blanks but actual and sometimes terrible things. ... I feel that I am absolutely dead in you, holding on to the merest of ghosts.<sup>27</sup>

Still, he could not give up on her. At one point he complained:

It is very hard to write you, and I write you over a sense of resistance. I want so damn many things all at once, and at the same time nothing at all. ... Oh, damn it, I can't help but think about things, and how they could be, and how they are not. I remember warm things you have said to me, and there is no more bitter mockery than their warmth; I wonder how you could have meant them then and not feel them now. Life seems so damned insane, so utterly impossibly incredible. ... How can the spirit go subtly right out of things and leave nothing there, so that you imagine yourself a fool or an idiot because you remember a warmth and a delight that is gone. ... What am I to think because I want you so directly and so primitively, all there is of you to have, tjere [there?] fleshly ways which are the fundamental ground of tenderness, and all the remoter tenderness which enters living everywhere from this beginning? I have to acknowledge that you do not feel this, that you do not want this. ... A[m] I to feel ashamed, or guilty, or abashed, because I feel such elemental things about you?<sup>28</sup>

Dale and Madeline's tortuous relationship, despite its strained aspects, and notwithstanding Tom McQuown's open dislike for Morgan, lasted years. Indeed, the two seemed to feed upon each other's foibles and fears and to gain strength from giving and receiving sympathy for all of the real and imagined trials which had been thrust upon them by the unfeeling and unsympathetic fates. Morgan supported McQuown's hypochondria and helped her through her bouts of depression and contem-

27. Morgan to McQuown, 14 Mar. 1940, McQuown Papers, Bx 2, fd 1.

28. Morgan to McQuown, undated, McQuown Papers, Bx 3, fd 3.



plation of suicide. She, in turn, read his complaints of loneliness brought on by deafness, as well as his feelings of despair and failure.<sup>29</sup>

The complex and tumultuous relationship between Madeline McQuown and Dale Morgan began to disintegrate during the mid-1960s and ended by late 1967. In 1968, when she thought she had cancer, a depressed Madeline said she wanted to take a gun, shoot Morgan, and then kill herself. Fortunately, she found out that she did not have cancer. Even so, their relationship was over. When Morgan died in 1971, McQuown learned that she would not receive his death insurance of over \$50,000 which had originally been intended for her. Within the last couple of years of Morgan's life, he had fallen in love with another woman and had left everything to her. McQuown was incensed and never forgave Morgan for what she perceived to be a final act of spite.<sup>30</sup>

Although no one will ever know the full reasons for the break-up of Madeline McQuown and Dale Morgan, a major cause may have been her biography of Brigham Young. At an early age Madeline had exhibited promise as a poet and writer. She had written numerous poems and short stories and had even attended the famous Bread Loaf seminar.<sup>31</sup> Although most of her writing had been poetry and fiction, she, like Fawn M. Brodie and other writers of Mormonism's so-called "Lost Generation," turned her attention to history. Perhaps in response to Brodie's success with biography, and with Morgan's encouragement,<sup>32</sup> McQuown announced that she was going to write the definitive biography of Brigham Young.

As early as 1946 or 1947 McQuown began work on the biography. In

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29. Interview with Gerald Finnin, [15]; Walker, 71-73; Novak, 130; and miscellaneous letters in the McQuown Papers.

30. Finnin, [16-18]. In a telephone interview with Everett L. Cooley, he mentioned that Morgan left his estate to the other woman he was living with at the time of his death. He also said that Finnin stated that "Madeline was so damned mad at Dale about the insurance that she started to cut up the correspondence." Morgan's funeral was in Utah and was conducted by his brother, Robert Morgan, who, according to Cooley, was a bishop and church employee.

31. Madeline Reeder had one poem published in the *Bread Loaf Anthology* (Middlebury, VT: Middlebury College Press, 1939), "To Those Unsuspecting": "Let the red fox dig his pointed nose/ In ferns by moonlight/ The sky hollow where the moon just rose/ with all fields turned white. Let the lynx crouch low to autumn/ Under black hemlock .../ Obsequies to this season done/ In the light stalk. Of animal foot and the hushed, hot breath/ Of the furred bodies:/ Let them gesture, the doomed to their death,/ The foxes, the trees. Under the moonlight before we grieve;/ Let these seasonal few—/ We die every Autumn before we leave—/ Take their adieu. Unsuspecting, unwarned, unheeded/ In an attitude/ Of customary living seeded/ With death let them take their last breath."

32. Morgan's lasting contribution to scholarship was probably as a bibliographer. However, he also had a considerable talent as an editor and was very perceptive in reading other people's manuscripts. Perhaps his greatest contribution to Mormon history was as a mentor to such writers as Juanita Brooks, Maureen Whipple, Fawn Brodie, and others.

the course of her research, she compiled an incredible collection of material concerning Young and various aspects of Mormon history. A good portion of this material was passed on to her by Morgan who had access to numerous diaries and documents through his various jobs with the federal Writer's Project, the Utah Historical Society, the Library of Congress, and later through the Bancroft Library.

In 1948 she told Morgan that her manuscript was over 1,000 pages in length.<sup>33</sup> Reports of near completion would be repeated for the next twenty-seven years. In fact, as late as 1973 she told Everett L. Cooley that she was within days of finishing the final manuscript. More than once she complained of poor health brought on by the tremendous amount of work she was putting into the manuscript.<sup>34</sup>

Because of her claims of being so close to finishing the manuscript, Morgan contacted Rhinehart & Company Publishers and talked them into signing a contract with McQuown. He suggested that they publish her book at or near the same time they published his long-awaited work on the history of Mormonism. Unfortunately, Rhinehart was to be disappointed on both counts. Not only did McQuown not complete her manuscript, but Morgan set his 127-page manuscript aside after he had used it to address a number of issues he viewed as problematic for the church. After several years of corresponding with McQuown, Rhinehart canceled her contract in 1953 about the same time that Morgan's contract was also canceled.<sup>35</sup>

During the time McQuown claimed to be writing, Morgan not only offered materials and other research-oriented forms of help, but also offered to review her manuscript. In 1951 he wrote,

I will be glad to help you on your book if you are as you say in a mood to be helped. Send along your manuscript or any part of it, and let me see what I can do, on any realistic terms, to help you move it along. You have resented my telling you so, but I have felt that you were utterly irrational in how you were trying to write it. ... You have wanted every kind of help from me so long as it did not require you to admit to yourself that I might contribute something to your book—as I did to Fawn's book, for example, or Nels Anderson's, or Juanita Brooks's, or any of half a dozen others. Better that I should send you whole files of documents for you to find yourself one note that you could use than that you should lay it on the line and show me what your problem was, your deficiencies in information, or what have you, and le[t] me help you or not, as I might be able.<sup>36</sup>

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33. Morgan to Fawn Brodie, 22 May 1948, in Novak, 132.

34. Telephone interview with Cooley.

35. Novak, 136; Walker, 193. It is interesting to note that McQuown promised in January 1952 a spring 1953 publication date. In a telephone interview Everett L. Cooley suggested that Morgan did not complete his manuscript on the history of the church because he was afraid it would hurt his family.

36. Morgan to McQuown, 10 June 1951, in Walker, 191.

Eventually, Morgan began to suspect that McQuown was not writing the biography. By 1967 he vented his frustration in a caustic letter in which he stated, “[Y]ou don’t, as a matter of fact, attach much importance to working on, or at least finishing, you[r] book. It is, in sober truth, the other way around. It is important to you *not* to finish your book. It always has been important to you *not* to finish your book.”<sup>37</sup> Ironically, only a few months later he used his influence to discourage Fawn Brodie from writing her own biography of Young.

Morgan would continue to protect McQuown’s secret to his death. McQuown, for her part, continued the sham until her own death four years later. In response to the question over motive for McQuown’s deception, some people have offered their own suggestions. Sam Weller, an acquaintance of McQuown, stated that she was “too damned lazy” and “too busy socially” to complete the manuscript. Everett L. Cooley, another acquaintance, opined that she had truly intended to write a great biography but that “she bit off more than she could chew.”<sup>38</sup>

In all probability, it was a combination of both. McQuown was guilty of putting off writing assignments until they were past due, which cost her at least one opportunity to publish a book review.<sup>39</sup> However, in light of the correspondence between McQuown and various scholars, historical organizations, and other entities, she truly wanted information and had a desire to complete a biography. Moreover, she had begun a manuscript which, while rough and amateurish, shows that she was serious enough in her goal to try to put words to paper.

However, it is apparent that her expectations had been unrealistic. Once into the project, she found that writing a book-length biography involved more than talking about it, collecting considerable material, and writing the acknowledgments, prologue, and preface. A woman who had battled feelings of self-doubt and frustration from early childhood could not and would not admit failure to herself, let alone the rest of the world. Instead, she lived a fantasy which allowed her to be close to the writers and intellectual community she admired. It also allowed her to be close to Morgan and enjoy the benefits of his knowledge and reputation among members of the scholarly community.<sup>40</sup>

In order to protect her charade, McQuown could not allow Morgan

37. Morgan to McQuown, 9 Feb. 1967, in Novak, 132.

38. Telephone interviews with Weller and Cooley.

39. An example of her tardiness costing her a publishing opportunity is a 19 April 1963 letter in which a book review was returned because she had submitted it too late for publication. McQuown Papers, Bx 1, fd.

40. McQuown Papers, Bx 8, fds 1-8, contain her manuscript. Her acknowledgments included a thank-you to Fawn M. Brodie which was later crossed out. The chapter titles are as follows: chapter 1, “The Company of the Poor”; chapter 2, “The Spirit of the Lord Was Poured Out Upon Us”; chapter 3, “Thru a Glass Darkly; and chapter 5, “Far West.”

to edit her manuscript. The manuscript, incomplete as it was, nevertheless is tainted with an obvious anti-Mormon bias, as well as an abundance of hyperbole. She was well aware of Morgan's editing skills and trenchant criticism. Although Morgan was in love with McQuown, his love would not make him turn a blind eye to the manuscript's inadequacies.

For his part, Morgan slowly began to realize that McQuown had no intention of finishing her manuscript. It appears that rather than expose Madeline's duplicity, he played along with her for several possible reasons. Morgan, always the mentor, probably hoped for the promised Brigham Young biography. On a more personal level, perhaps he wanted once and for all to win her heart or, at the very least, keep in contact with her.

Even so, a game of deceit can only be played for so long, especially when it benefits only one side. At first Morgan appears to have believed in McQuown's biography and had high expectations for it. Later it is obvious he began to have his doubts about it but was still encouraging and prodding. By the end, however, he must surely have figured out that the biography would never materialize but was still protecting McQuown. Therefore there is little doubt that Morgan carried the weight of the deceit by encouraging and promoting a book that would never appear, thus risking his reputation as a scholar and mentor on a woman who, by the later stages of their relationship, was, at best, indifferent.

In retrospect, it is obvious that McQuown and Morgan had an intense, sometimes intimate relationship that, in its early stages at least, benefitted both. They helped and supported each other in their hopes, fears, and goals. Both appear to have lived in a fantasy world.

Morgan's fantasy was that he would eventually marry Madeline and would fully realize the intimacy and normality he desired. Madeline, on the other hand, fantasized of writing the ultimate Brigham Young biography and of achieving the same recognition and respect which Fawn Brodie had found with her Joseph Smith biography. Unfortunately, these parallel realities could never come together. Madeline and Dale eventually parted ways in bitterness.

Whether the manuscript was a catalyst or just a part of the final conflict between the two will never be known. What is interesting to note is that Morgan continued to protect McQuown's reputation even after their final rift and was able to sufficiently discourage Brodie from pursuing her own Brigham Young biography. Unfortunately, it will never be known if it was out of a still lingering love or protection of his own reputation.

What is known is that because of McQuown's claims, Brodie did not write a biography of Young. Undoubtedly, there were other historians

who at least had a passing interest in writing about Young but, ultimately, did not because of the common knowledge within the scholarly community that McQuown was heavily involved in a manuscript which would shortly be appearing.

While the result of this deception was, realistically speaking, minimal, and McQuown's unfinished book nothing more than a minor footnote in the study of Mormon history, several significant things did occur because of her unrealized biography. The first is the revealing correspondence between Morgan and McQuown which not only addresses many issues in research and writing but also offers interesting insight into Brigham Young. And there is a significant collection of material concerning Young and early Utah.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Madeline's claims helped discourage decent Brigham Young studies until the mid-1980s with the publication of works such as Newell G. Bringhurst's intimate look at the early Mormon leader and Leonard J. Arrington's near-definitive *Brigham Young: American Moses*.

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41. Both the McQuown and Morgan collections are rich in manuscript materials concerning early LDS and Utah history.