

My “Affair” with Fawn McKay Brodie: Motives, Pain, and Pleasure

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OVER THE COURSE OF SOME THIRTEEN YEARS I was involved in an intense “affair” with a woman other than my wife. My long term affair with Fawn McKay Brodie, literary in nature, involved the research and writing of a book-length biography on this much misunderstood woman, best known among Latter-day Saints for her controversial Joseph Smith biography, *No Man Knows My History*.

In what turned out to be an obsessive affair, three questions are of particular relevance: (1) What motivated me to undertake a biography of Fawn McKay Brodie? (2) What problems and obstacles did I confront in researching and writing the biography, provoking both short and long-term pain? and (3) what were the pleasures, that is, rewards and benefits I derived from this venture?

First, my motives for researching and writing the life of Fawn Brodie were complex and multifaceted. On a basic level, I can recall the precise time and place that I decided to do a biography. The time was October 1985 and the place Sacramento, California, during the annual Western History Association meeting. Here I met and chatted with Roy Webb, an archivist with the Marriott Library at the University of Utah. During our conversation Webb informed me that his library had just finished processing Fawn Brodie’s personal and private papers, recently deposited in their Special Collections. At that moment, I knew that I wanted to investigate Fawn Brodie’s life and career.

I was already well-aware of Fawn Brodie and her work. Coming from a Mormon background and growing up in Utah, I knew of her writings, especially her controversial *No Man Knows My History*. My earliest recollections of Brodie are rooted in vague childhood memories. Certain devout Latter-day Saints in the small Utah town where I grew up became

upset with the director of our local library, Ruth Vine Tyler, for acquiring *No Man Knows My History* and making it available to patrons. Also I recall the presence in my childhood neighborhood of two individuals personally acquainted with Brodie. One was my next door neighbor, Artis Poulson Soulier, whose father M. Wilford Poulson, a one-time BYU Psychology Professor, had been particularly close to Brodie. Poulson, in fact, aided and encouraged Brodie in her research on Joseph Smith. I did not realize this, however, until much later. At the time I simply knew Wilford Poulson as the white-haired grandfather who frequently visited the next door neighbors.

The second neighbor acquainted with Brodie was Everett Cooley, who lived down the street from me. Cooley, then-director of the Utah Historical Society and later director of the University of Utah Special Collections Library, became close to Brodie during the author's later years. As a result, Cooley was able to persuade Brodie to donate her various papers to the University of Utah rather than UCLA—where she had served as a member of the history department.

As for myself, I did not actually get around to reading *No Man Knows My History* until much later. But I became aware of the intense controversy surrounding the biography after entering the University of Utah. Here I encountered scholars of Mormon studies deeply divided concerning the pros and cons of this work. My history graduate advisor, A. Russell Mortensen, was outspoken in his praise for both the author and her book. I vividly recall one occasion during which Mortensen became quite emotional, in fact breaking down in tears, in referring both to Brodie's courage as an author and her willingness to speak out on controversial issues.

On the other side was A. William Lund, one-time Assistant LDS Church Historian. I remember a 1966 conversation that I had with Lund, whom I encountered in securing access to the Mormon church archives for research that I was doing in completing my Master's thesis. Lund, in the process of a careful, somewhat intimidating interview before allowing me into the church's highly-restricted archives (then located in the old church headquarters at 47 East South Temple), solemnly told me that the church had to be very careful to whom it allowed access. The church's highly restrictive policy, he told me, was due to the critical mistake made years earlier, in allowing that "awful Brodie woman" to use the archives. This had resulted in her "scurrilous account" of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Lund further explained that Brodie had deliberately deceived church officials concerning the type of biography she intended to write. Worse still, according to Lund, Brodie had taken advantage of her McKay family connections.

All of this sound and fury notwithstanding, I did not actually read the Joseph Smith biography until after completing my master's thesis and leaving Utah. My delay was due to the fact that my master's degree,

while focusing on Utah history, did not deal directly with the Mormon church nor its early history. I chose to write on George H. Dern, a non-Mormon mining entrepreneur-turned-politician who became Utah's governor in the 1920s and later Secretary of War under Franklin Roosevelt.¹ I selected Dern primarily because he was a prominent Utahan who was *not* a Latter-day Saint! I sought to avoid Mormon history altogether, motivated by personal considerations. I was also influenced by peer pressure at the University of Utah—an institution where the entire field of Mormon history tended to be dismissed by many of my fellow graduate students and certain faculty members as narrow and parochial. Such negative attitudes toward things Mormon had been noted by none other than Fawn Brodie herself in the wake of her own attendance at the University of Utah some thirty years earlier, wherein she dubbed that institution “the seat of anticlericalism in Utah.”²

Not until after leaving Utah and entering the University of California at Davis to pursue studies for a Ph.D. in history, did I finally get around to reading *No Man Knows My History*. This came in 1970 after I had completed the preliminary examinations for my doctorate and been advanced to candidacy. My specific interest in Brodie, at this point, was motivated by the subject that I had chosen for my doctoral dissertation. I took on this subject, which ultimately resulted in my first book, *Saints, Slaves and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism*, most reluctantly after rejecting a number of other non-Mormon topics, which I'd found either not viable and/or not appealing.³ At this point I was finally drawn to Brodie's writings, not initially her Joseph Smith biography, but rather to a speech that she had given in October 1970 to a standing-room-only audience of 500 in the Lafayette Ballroom at the old Hotel Utah—now known, ironically, as the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. Brodie's entire speech was published shortly thereafter as a pamphlet under the title *Can We Manipulate the Past?* In this work, Brodie discussed various historical issues and problems relative to African-Americans and their place in the church, speculating as to the historical origins of the now defunct practice of Mormon black priesthood denial.⁴

After reading Brodie's pamphlet, I turned to *No Man Knows My History*, carefully reading it, finding Brodie's well-written narrative of

1. Newell G. Bringhurst, “The Mining Career of George Henry Dern,” (Master's Thesis, University of Utah, 1967).

2. Shirley E. Stephenson, “Biography of Fawn McKay Brodie.” Based on an interview, 30 November 1975. Oral History Collection, Fullerton State University, Fullerton, California.

3. Newell G. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: the Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1981).

4. Fawn McKay Brodie, *Can We Manipulate the Past?* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1970).

Joseph Smith's life and career most compelling, provocative, and absorbing. This in turn stimulated my ideas and thinking in new directions relevant to my dissertation topic. I carefully examined her discussion of the specific issues of race, slavery, and African-Americans as they involved Joseph Smith and the early church, finding some useful information and "leads" aiding me in my ongoing research. However, I found the specialized works on the Mormon-black issue written by other scholars of greater value. This included the path-breaking studies of Armand Mauss, Dennis L. Lythgoe, Stephen G. Taggart, Jan Shipps, and Lester E. Bush, Jr.

After completing my dissertation and graduating from the University of California, Davis, in 1975, I moved on to Boise State University where I assumed a one-year temporary sabbatical replacement position. In January 1976, I wrote Fawn Brodie, seeking her advice concerning the publication potential for my just-completed dissertation. My decision to approach Brodie came out of the blue, on complete impulse. As a young scholar, I was desperate to get my work published to aid me in securing a permanent academic position.⁵

Writing Fawn Brodie was rather presumptuous on my part. Brodie, by this time, had achieved prominence as a nationally recognized biographer. Her recently-published *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* had appeared on the New York Times "Best Seller List" for a total of thirteen weeks in 1974. Thus, I was both surprised and flattered when Brodie actually responded to my letter, doing so promptly, within two weeks after I'd written her. Even more startling was her generous offer to read my dissertation and especially her promise: "If I think it's really good, I'd be happy to recommend it for publication."⁶ After reading my dissertation, Brodie wrote me once more, encouraging me to revise my work and describing it as "worthy of publication as a book" while offering suggestions for improvement.

On the one hand, she praised my effort as "written up with care and excellence" admitting that she had "learned much from it."⁷ But at the same time she was disarmingly honest in pointing out various deficiencies. Brodie suggested ways in which I could revise my work to make it suitable for publication. She encouraged me in my efforts over the subsequent three year period from 1976 to 1979. In a critique of my manuscript, Brodie noted, "I do think you were a little evasive in the beginning in han-

5. Newell G. Bringhurst to Fawn M. Brodie, 21 January 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

6. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 1 February 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

7. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 5 April 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

dling Joseph Smith. You were much more forthright about Brigham Young."⁸ On another occasion Brodie was even more frank. She criticized what she saw as "a non-professional quality" in my writing, stating that

you continue to write as a jack-Mormon who is afraid of offending devout Mormons. There is a kind of disembodied quality about [it]. You write about the Book of Mormon as if Joseph Smith were nowhere in the neighborhood. It is he, not the book, who reflected the racism of his time, in regard to the Indians as well as blacks. It is the writer, not the book itself, whom we do not see. This chapter fails to come to life because there are no people in it.⁹

At the same time, Brodie encouraged me to push ahead with revisions, urging me to seek the input of other scholars. In addition, she approached and/or wrote letters on my behalf to the editors of three different university presses promoting my manuscript. In one instance, when I informed her that Utah State University Press was considering publication of my work, she volunteered, without being asked, to write a letter to the editor on my behalf. If I desired such a letter, I was to let her know as soon as possible. But she also left me the option to decline her generous offer. Well-aware of the controversy she still generated within Utah, Brodie carefully warned me: "Some people in Utah are turned off rather than on by a letter from me, and I don't want to do you a disadvantage by writing a letter praising you."¹⁰ I was most grateful for all of Fawn Brodie's help and encouragement as I struggled to secure publication of my manuscript. This, in turn, made me want to get to know both the woman and her work better.

Also motivating me to write on Fawn Brodie was my own long-standing interest in the craft and challenges of biography. I had, of course, done a biographical study of George H. Dern as a master's thesis in the late 1960s. A decade later, in late 1978, I was approached by Mary Lythgoe Bradford and Lester E. Bush, Jr., then-co-editors of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, to write an essay on Elijah Abel, an early black Mormon priesthood holder ordained by Joseph Smith. They wanted an article on Abel for a special issue of *Dialogue* prompted by the recent lifting of the ban on Mormon black priesthood ordination in June 1978. My *Dialogue* essay was published in the summer of 1979 under the title "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism."

8. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 26 May 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

9. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 11 April 1979 (copy of original in author's possession).

10. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 11 May 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

After the 1981 publication of my *Saints Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism*, I signed a contract with Little, Brown & Co. to write a short book-length biography on Brigham Young for their "Library of American Biography" series under the general editorship of eminent Harvard historian, Oscar Handlin. My modest effort was published in 1986 under the title *Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier*. Unfortunately, it appeared in the immediate aftermath of Leonard J. Arrington's *magnam opus*, *American Moses: The Life of Brigham Young*, and as a consequence was largely ignored and overlooked by scholars and lay persons alike, particularly within the Mormon community. Despite this major disappointment, I was ready to be challenged by a new biographical subject.

I was also attracted to Fawn Brodie by the simple fact that I personally identified with certain aspects of her life and career, just as Brodie clearly identified with particular aspects of the lives of the five biographical subjects on which she focused her own research and writing, specifically: Joseph Smith, Thaddeus Stevens, Richard F. Burton, Thomas Jefferson, and finally Richard M. Nixon.

As Brodie herself stated, "there is always a deep personal commitment in the writing of a biography," including "compelling inner reasons." "The subject chosen," she continued, "can also tell us a lot about [the] biographer."¹¹ Similar observations have been made by two other writers familiar with the art of biographical writing. Leon Edel, a noted biographer who spent twenty years writing his five volume life of Henry James, stated that "biographers are invariably drawn to the writing of biography out of some deep personal motive."¹² James Atlas went one step further, suggesting that "the biographer's subject enacts the main themes of the biographer's own life."¹³

There are, indeed, clear parallels between my own life and that of Fawn Brodie. She was born of stalwart Mormon pioneer stock, her ancestors having migrated to Utah during the mid-nineteenth century. Similarly, my own Mormon ancestors migrated west under Brigham Young's direction. Also like Fawn, who grew up in Huntsville, a rural Mormon hamlet ten miles east of Ogden, I was reared in a small Utah town twelve miles south of Salt Lake City. As teenagers both Fawn McKay and I questioned basic Mormon beliefs. Both of us married outside the Mormon faith. We both became alienated from the church as a result of careful

11. Fawn M. Brodie as quoted by Digby Diehl, "Woman of the Year: Humanizer of History," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 March 1975.

12. Leon Edel as quoted by Robert Dallack in "My Search for Lyndon Johnson," *American Heritage* 42 (September 1991): 84.

13. James Atlas, "Choosing a Life," *New York Time Book Review*, 13 January 1991.

research into certain disturbing aspects of Mormonism's historical past. In Brodie's case, this involved her meticulous research over a period of some seven years into the life of Joseph Smith, which caused her to conclude that Mormonism's founder was a "conscious imposter."¹⁴ In my own case, the process involved careful research into the origins and evolution of Mormon practices relative to black people. I developed a sense of moral outrage at what I saw as the contradictions and tortured reasoning used to justify Mormonism's now-defunct practice of denying blacks the priesthood.

As I became more deeply involved in research for the Brodie biography, I detected one other important element of identification. I was hauntingly reminded of my own late mother in examining certain aspects of Brodie's personality and behavior. My mother and Fawn were contemporaries, part of what Tom Brokaw has characterized as "The Greatest Generation," those individuals born during the 1910s to the late 1920s who came of age during the Great Depression and endured the anxieties and sacrifices of World War II. Like my mother, moreover, Fawn was a caring, empathic individual who considered the welfare and needs of her immediate family first, despite her active quest for knowledge and strong desire to express herself through writing. In putting her husband and children first, as expected of all married women in post World War II America, Fawn, like my own mother, deferred a career in teaching and full-time research/writing until her three children (the same number as in my own birth family) were fully grown. Both Fawn and my mother enjoyed people, eagerly interacting with a wide variety of individuals. Also both women graduated from the University of Utah with degrees in English and both with honors. Both were teachers who related well with their students. Finally both died while relatively young; Fawn was sixty-five and my own mother was just forty-nine.

Turning to the second issue of pain—what obstacles and challenges did I confront in researching and writing my Fawn Brodie biography? The obstacles were numerous, given that it took me some thirteen years to complete the biography. When I commenced research in early 1986, I never conceived that it would take me that long. My just-completed *Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier* had taken me less than four years to complete. Thus, I hoped and expected Fawn Brodie to take me five to six years, maximum. I was wrong! An important obstacle was my academic position as a full-time community college instructor, compelling me to teach five classes or fifteen unit hours per semester. Off-setting this impediment, somewhat, was the fact that I secured two

14. Stephenson, "Biography of Fawn McKay Brodie," 10.

one year sabbaticals. The first, granted in 1988-89, allowed me to complete the bulk of my research in various libraries located both in Utah and California and to interview some 60-70 individuals who knew and interacted with Brodie throughout the course of her life. The second, in 1996-7, allowed me time to complete a first draft of my manuscript.

But even before I actually commenced with research, I was confronted with a second significant challenge. That involved dealing with both fact and rumor that other individuals were researching Brodie's life and career. I harbored strong anxieties that all my efforts might be preempted and, thus, rendered useless. In fact, two scholars before me had done preliminary work on Brodie. The first was one of Brodie's former UCLA graduate students, Judith Anderson, who gave a paper on the recently-deceased psychobiographer at the August 1982 Pacific Coast Branch meeting of the American Historical Association in Palo Alto, California. The second individual working on Brodie was Shirley Stephenson, one-time assistant director of the oral history program at California State University, Fullerton. Stephenson had become acquainted with Brodie while the author was doing research for her last biography, *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character*. Stephenson interviewed Brodie in November, 1975, producing a most revealing, thorough interview—a document from which I ultimately drew a great deal of useful information for my own study.¹⁵

In fact, Stephenson, upon learning of my interest in Brodie, approached me about working together on a book-length Brodie biography. I initially consented to this. But alas, our collaborative effort proved an utter failure for reasons controversial and complex. In the end, neither Anderson nor Stephenson followed through on their intentions to do a book-length biography. Neither did two other scholars in the field of Mormon studies who had also expressed preliminary interest in doing a Brodie biography, namely Klaus Hansen, a professor at Queens College in Kingston, Ontario, best known from his classic study, *Quest For Empire: The Council of the Fifty*; nor Will Bagley, a free-lance writer and author of *Blood of the Prophets*, a very recently published, highly controversial account of the Mountain Meadows massacre.¹⁶

A third major set of obstacles involved problems with Fawn Brodie's family. At various points in time, all three of Brodie's children expressed reservations concerning what I was doing. Initially, however, Fawn's oldest son, Richard Brodie, appeared most enthusiastic about my project, allowing me to interview him in July 1987. The result was a revealing,

15. *Ibid.*

16. Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

frank interview concerning his mother and her activities. Richard also seemed anxious to help me in other ways. In particular, he claimed to have in his possession a collection of "intimate letters" written by his mother to his father during times when they were apart. He offered to share these materials with me.

By contrast, Fawn's younger son, Bruce Brodie, a clinical psychologist, was much more reticent, at least in the beginning. Bruce did grant me an interview as did his wife Janet, which took me to the Brodie's beautiful Pacific Palisades home where Fawn herself had lived for the last thirty years of her life. But Bruce was much more guarded than his older brother in discussing varied aspects of his mother's life as well as his relationship with her. Bruce, moreover, expressed reservations about my efforts to chronicle Fawn's life and activities. In writing me, Bruce conceded that his mother "would have been highly honored at the idea." Yet, he continued, "she was an intensely private person and would not want her personal life publicly broadcast." Still, Bruce continued: "If you do choose to go ahead, she would have demanded that the [biography] be thorough and honest. Anything less, she would have despised."¹⁷ Fawn's daughter, Pamela, expressed similar reservations, at least initially.

Ultimately, a strange reversal of attitudes took place among the Brodie children. By early 1989, Richard Brodie, for reasons that are not completely clear, became very antagonistic, and, in fact, downright hostile. He went so far as to threaten me with legal action if I used any of the material that he had provided in the interview I had conducted with him a year and a half earlier, informing me of his intent in a nasty, threatening letter sent me via certified mail.¹⁸ Equally frustrating was Richard's unwillingness to share Fawn's so-called "intimate letters" exchanged between his parents, which he claimed to have in his possession. He, in fact, discounted their significance, causing me to question their actual existence.

By contrast, Bruce Brodie and his wife Janet—herself a professor of history at Claremont College—along with Pamela Brodie became increasingly cooperative and helpful as I continued to push ahead with the biography. Bruce, as executor of Fawn Brodie's estate, signed various letters of consent allowing me access to certain letters and documents written by his mother and deposited in private collections and/or special archives and, thus, unavailable. Also as I neared completion the biography, Bruce's wife Janet provided a number of photographs which ap-

17. Bruce R. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 7 March 1986 (original in author's possession).

18. Richard M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 15 January 1989 (original in author's possession).

peared in the published book, including the striking, never-before-published late 1940's photograph of Fawn Brodie in a boat on some unnamed bucolic New England lake. This particular photo was used on the published biography's dust jacket. Particularly heartening was Bruce Brodie's reaction to the finished biography. He wrote to me, thanking me for a copy of the biography sent to him.

As I was reading, I could not help but wonder what my mother would have thought if she were alive to read it. I doubt that she would have been very pleased at having her childhood masturbation fantasies made quite so public, but she, of course, spent so much time delving into the sex lives of other people that this is one of her own petards that [she] could not object to being hoisted on.

All in all, I'm pretty certain that she would have liked it. She of course would have been enormously flattered to have a biography written about her at all. But I also think she would have appreciated your book in particular. You clearly like and respected her, and you bent over backwards to be fair to her through all of the controversies of her life, up until the very end. My family and I are especially grateful for your fairness.¹⁹

Meanwhile, Pamela Brodie had taken time to carefully read a complete first draft of my manuscript in the spring of 1998, doing this despite her own busy schedule, having moved to Alaska where she was working as an environmental activist with the Sierra Club. Pamela's lengthy critique was particularly helpful in pointing out errors of fact and in clarifying certain points of confusion. I was also hearted by Pamela's generally positive response to what I had written about her mother. She commented at the beginning of her letter to me: "First, let me congratulate you. You have done an excellent job of scholarship, and have produced a well written, largely accurate book. I am pleased with it and, quite frankly, relieved."²⁰ Most important, Pamela provided a number of incisive insights concerning her mother. In particular the following observation seemed to capture who her mother was and what had motivated her during the course of her life:

To me, what distinguished my mother most from other people I have known was not her intelligence, but her enormous discipline and dedication to her work—a dedication that was unrelated to working with others, or to any need or expectation of financial reward. Other than the dinner parties and an annual trip to Utah to visit family, she rarely participated in any form of recreation. When she did, (such as other travel), it was always motivated by

19. Bruce R. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 20 March 2000 (original in author's possession).

20. Pamela Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 22 January 1998 (original in author's possession).

my father. Her focus was to make as much time as possible available for her research and writing. Despite all the recognition she got as a child—or perhaps because of the nature of this recognition—she remained a fundamentally insecure person. As a child she was valued not (as most girls are) for her disposition, obedience, charm, or looks—but for (as boys often are) her accomplishments, to be of value as a person. It wasn't until she sent off the Nixon manuscript and lay dying that she learned to just value life for the living, instead of for the working. It was rather late.²¹

Besides problems with some of Fawn Brodie's own family, I encountered yet another set of obstacles. This involved a less-than-enthusiastic response from certain members of my own family. Most significantly, my wife Mary Ann never warmed up to my Fawn Brodie biography. My wife, while a voracious reader of all kinds of literature, including biography, felt that Fawn Brodie's life and career were not sufficiently eventful nor exciting to merit a biography—certainly not one produced by her own husband. But Mary Ann, while not at all interested in Brodie or my related efforts, supported me through the many years that it took, being sensitive to what the biography meant to me.

Certain members of my extended family in Utah were even more negative. This was the case with my younger brother, a devout, practicing Latter-day Saint, and his wife. My sister-in-law was particularly hostile. An unpleasant confrontation occurred when I described a less-than-heroic incident involving Fawn's uncle, David O. McKay. She blew up at me, accusing me of maliciously attacking "her church," as she put it, and its leaders. Less confrontational but equally negative was the reaction of another relative, an elderly aunt, who, upon hearing that I was writing about Fawn Brodie, asked me through her brother (my father): "Why would anyone be interested in the life of that awful woman?" Needless to say, I learned to avoid discussing the topic of my research with these and certain other family members.

But at the same time another aunt, my late mother's younger sister, herself a devout practicing Latter-day Saint, was extremely supportive. She enthusiastically encouraged me in my ongoing research, sharing with me the excitement of discovering a significant new document or revealing anecdote gleaned from an oral interview. My aunt, moreover, carefully read and critiqued various drafts of my written text as the manuscript slowly took form. Likewise, my father, also an active Latter-day Saint, encouraged and supported me throughout the entire enterprise, manifesting fatherly pride in what I was doing.

All such obstacles notwithstanding, the ultimate payoff question is: What rewards and benefits did I derive from my long-standing literary

21. Ibid.

affair with Fawn Brodie? Or what were the pleasures? On a strictly monetary level, the rewards have been minimal. Long before its publication, I was well aware that *Fawn Brodie: A Biographer's Life* would never make the *New York Times* "Best Seller" list as had Brodie's own *Thomas Jefferson* twenty-five years earlier. The best that I can claim is an advance of \$3000 from my publisher, University of Oklahoma Press.

Other rewards were less tangible. Through the oral interviews that I conducted, I had the privilege of meeting and interacting with some 60 to 70 interesting, articulate individuals acquainted with Brodie during the course of her busy, eventful life. These included childhood acquaintances, whom I interviewed mainly in Utah, especially in Ogden and in the author's bucolic childhood home of Huntsville. Through interviews I met and got to know members of Brodie's birth family, including her three sisters and one brother—all four intelligent, well-read individuals in their own right. Also I interviewed a number of Fawn's cousins. Particularly noteworthy were the Huntsville McKays who lived next door to Fawn during her childhood years, specifically former U. S. Congressman Gunn McKay and his younger brother Monroe McKay, a United States District Court judge.

In California I had the opportunity to interview Fawn's three children and daughter-in-law. I also gained information from Brodie's neighbors in Pacific Palisades, most notably Emmy Award winning director and close friend Lamont Johnson. Also providing oral recollections were various professional acquaintances whom Fawn and Bernard Brodie knew and interacted with at UCLA, RAND, and within the Los Angeles psychoanalytic community.

But I was rewarded in a much more significant way. I had the opportunity to become personally acquainted with Fawn McKay Brodie herself, albeit in a vicarious way. I deeply regret I never had the opportunity to meet the subject of my biography face to face, despite our correspondence. Nevertheless, I developed a keen awareness of the life and times of a most remarkable woman. I found Brodie to be an individual who practiced academic and intellectual honesty in her own writing as well as through her teaching. Such knowledge, in turn, influenced and affected my own attitudes concerning family, friends, professional colleagues, and my own Mormon heritage. Indeed, as Frank Vandiver, himself a biographer, has stated, "Biographers lucky to live for some time in the company of a character sense a change in their own lives."²² Such was the case during the course of my own long-term literary affair with Fawn McKay Brodie.

22. Frank E. Vandiver, "Biography as an Agent of Humanism," in ed. Stephen B. Oates, *Biography as High Adventure* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 60.