

THE WEST OF DALE L. MORGAN

Jedediah Strong Smith is not a name well known to most people, but he is one of the greats among that irrepressible band of explorers and fur trappers of the Rocky Mountain west, known as mountain men. Smith's legendary status among these giants is due in large part to a biography written in 1953 by Dale L. Morgan. Smith's unique rank is evidenced by the fact that he is the only mountain man who has his own society.

I was first introduced to Jedediah Smith in 1966 while attending law school in Washington, DC. One of my fellow students discovered Dale Morgan's biography of Smith while studying western economic history under Dr. Leonard J. Arrington, a well known Utah historian and later the Mormon Church official historian. He spent a night introducing a group of us to this fur trapper that we had never heard of before, even though we all grew up in the west. He had a paperback copy of Morgan's biography which he shared with us.

At the time, none of us paid any attention to the author of Smith's biography. Over time, however, I developed an interest in the history of the fur trade era and realized that Jedediah Smith was, in fact, a very unique figure. One of the first fur trade books I purchased and read was the Morgan biography. Later, when I started to collect fur trade and mountain man books, I came to realize that Dale Morgan was an important chronicler of the fur trade era. His name seemed to appear everywhere as an author or editor and he had an amazing depth and breadth of writing about both the mountain men and their era.

Even though Morgan's biography of Smith was written over fifty years ago, it is so well researched and so well written that no one has yet produced a credible substitute. It is a classic of the era and is on almost everyone's list as one of the best biographies ever written about the fur trade. There seems to be some current interest by some authors in writing a new definitive Smith biography, but Morgan's book is so daunting that only a very confident author would attempt to replace it. It is interesting to note that although many fur trappers do have more recent biographies, most of the recent biographies of Smith are children's books. Morgan's biography may last for another fifty years.

Anyone who delves into Rocky Mountain fur trade history, sooner or later comes to realize that Morgan has a dominant presence because of both the quality and quantity of his writings. Only one or two other writers even approach Morgan in terms of the quantity of work. In 1990, Richard L. Saunders published a *Descriptive Bibliography of The Published Writings of Dale L. Morgan*, which presents the published results of the extensive writing career of Dale L. Morgan. What is so striking about the bibliography is that Morgan's writings and interests extend even further than his books and articles on the fur trade.

As a result of reading the Saunders' bibliography, I learned four things about Dale Morgan that are not apparent from his fur trade books. First, Dale Morgan grew up in Utah in an old time Mormon family but subsequently left the church. Since this is my own narrative, I immediately related to Morgan in a way that I had not done previously. In all of the years I had been reading Morgan's books about the fur trade, I did not learn about his Mormon Church affiliation. It was not in his book biography because it was not something that he considered to be important.

Second, Dale Morgan was totally deaf and he could not communicate by voice with anyone, including his professional colleagues. The fact that he overcame this handicap, that could have been a significant impediment, made Morgan's work even more impressive. Hearing impairment is not a characteristic that an author would be likely to publicize, but it certainly made his work more difficult to accomplish.

Third, Morgan did not have an advanced degree in history yet he accomplished so much and achieved an impressive status in the world of the history of the Rocky Mountain west. I always assumed that his academic affiliation meant that he had a PhD in history from some prestigious school. It is surprising that someone without an advanced history degree could have achieved Morgan's status in this field.

Fourth, and probable most impressive, his interests in western history extended beyond the fur trade. Indeed, Morgan had three major interests that were the focus of all of his historical research and writings. First was obviously the fur trade. Second was his interest in the Overland Trail and the California Gold Rush, and his writings in this field are also impressive. His third interest was the history of the Mormon Church. Although, his actual writings on this topic are limited, at the time of his death one of his major unfinished works was a comprehensive history of the Mormons. This lifelong fascination is evidenced by a letter he wrote to his cousin in 1938 that "[t]here is a golden opportunity for some gifted writer to produce the first extensive, penetrating work on the whole phenomena of Utah, the West and the Mormon relation to itself and both". He had made it clear to his friends for many years that he intended to write that history. Unfortunately he died before this objective would be realized.

Dale Lowell Morgan was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on December 19, 1914. His parents were James Lowell and Emily Holmes Morgan and one of his ancestors was Orson Pratt, who was one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles established by the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, prior to his death. Dale was the oldest of four children and his parents were probably a typical middle class Mormon family until the death of his father when Dale was only six years old.

After the death of his father, circumstances for the Morgans got difficult and Mrs. Morgan returned to school to get enough education to support her family by teaching school. Dale was very close to his mother, being the oldest, and he was a typical boy enjoying physical activities and being active with his friends. However, his youth was tragically interrupted at the age of fourteen, when an attack of spinal meningitis left him totally deaf. He later said, "The loss of my hearing at a stroke cut me off from the

leadership in my school and my neighborhood which I had previously experienced; I shrank from the conspicuity of my disability; I could not or would not establish myself socially."

After the hearing loss, his mother transferred him to another school in Salt Lake City which had a lip reading program. His mother insisted that he spend time learning to lip read assisted by his brothers and his sister Ruth. Despite the strong support for lip reading by his mother and family, he had a difficult time mastering it and at a later point in his life described it as working "by guess and by God" to try to gather what the speaker is saying in context. Richard Saunders, the Morgan bibliographer, speculates that he was frustrated by the necessity of supposition in the lip reading process because of his "drive for accuracy", which is evident in the research contained in the extensive footnoting in his books.

As a result of his personal trials with lip reading, Morgan became more and more reluctant to communicate through speech to anyone except to his family and really close friends. For all others, he communicated by writing on a pad, or by writing letters. His communication with colleagues involved extensive written exchanges about areas of mutual interests. His professional colleagues found communicating with him very tiring and difficult. His voice was described by his friends as high pitched and loud and not very pleasant. "Afflicted as he was, unable to hear the tones of his own voice, much less another's, he spoke in a high pitched monotone, words pouring out in answer to questions and fragments put to him on scraps of paper".

He graduated from high school in 1933 in the middle of the depression, but was only one year behind his class despite being thrust suddenly into a silent world at the beginning of high school. Like many other high school graduates, Morgan then faced a career choice. Because of his handicap, his options were much more limited than his peers. His relatives later indicated that he was terrified of what his future might be as a hearing impaired youth and how he could make it in the world of a depression economy. At that point, he did not have a clear idea of how to proceed with his life.

During the summer of 1933, he became a voracious reader of novels and magazine fiction often reading as many as nine novels in a week. It was during this phase that he developed the great power of concentration that he exhibited throughout his writing career. He also started to hone his ability to comprehend the written word and to be able to remember the information he had read. He could use this information later when he needed it for his historical writing. He also developed a speed reading skill that enabled him to read and comprehend a written page in three seconds. It is clear that his speed reading skill and power of concentration enabled him to produce the large volume of written material that he achieved during his lifetime.

Fortunately for Morgan, in 1933 Utah had a program that offered college scholarships to good students with handicaps. He applied for and was able to get a probationary scholarship due to his academic achievement in high school, and the scholarship was supplemented by a monthly stipend from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration's

student aid program. This allowed him to enroll at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and live at home while attending college.

At college, Morgan decided to major in art, encouraged by his high school art teacher to feel that his artistic ability, which he had developed during high school, would enable him to find a better job after graduation. He did have a natural talent for art but he was more interested in drawing live subjects than inanimate objects or landscapes. His interest in life drawing continued for only a few years after graduation and as one writer has said it "came to provide a modicum of vicarious satisfaction for the human intimacy he felt he lacked."

He graduated from the University of Utah in 1937 with a BS degree in commercial art. Even though he majored in art, during his college years he also wrote stories as a staff writer for the student newspaper, *Chronicle*. At the *Chronicle*, he worked under the direction of Wallace Stegner, who was the faculty advisor and later became a well respected Utah writer. Morgan also wrote several essays and fiction for the student literary magazine. After college, he started out pursuing a career in advertising in Utah, but the depression made jobs hard to come by. In July of 1938, he finally landed a job, through one of his friends, with the Utah Historical Records Survey of the Works Progress Administration. He began his career with the WPA as a clerk and was subsequently promoted to editor and later to supervisor. This fortunate turn of events was a pivotal moment and set him on a life long course of historical research and writing.

His work at the Records Survey included producing inventories of county historical records in seven of Utah's counties, and in 1941 he participated with other writers of the Utah Writer's Project of the WPA in the production of *Utah: A Guide to the State*, his first full length book. He later described his work with the Writer's Project as "in a capacity sometimes called historian, sometimes historical editor".

Prior to the publication of the WPA Guide, Morgan wrote to the publisher of the Rivers of America Series, Farrar & Reinhart, proposing to write a book for that series about the Humboldt River, a Nevada River that paralleled a portion of the California Trail from Utah to California. At the time of his letter, the series had published only six books. Despite his lack of experience as a published writer, Farrar accepted Morgan's proposal and sent him a contract.

While Morgan was still with the Writer's Project, they decided to publish the first Utah ordinances which were promulgated when Utah was still called the State of Deseret. Morgan undertook the task of writing a twenty-five hundred word introduction to the ordinances. This soon turned into a more major work, including a history of the first Mormon provisional government in Utah that lasted for three years until Utah achieved territorial status in 1850. The Morgan monograph was subsequently published in the Utah Historical Quarterly in October of 1940 in three combined issues as *The State of Deseret*.

He began working on the Humboldt book during his off hours while still at the WPA. During that same time, his WPA project involved writing a history of Provo Utah, *Provo*:

Pioneer Mormon City, which was published in 1941 by Binsfords and Mort of Portland, Oregon. The book did not attract a wide audience and was the last project Morgan undertook for the Utah Writer's Project.

Morgan delivered his finished transcript of *The Humboldt* to the publisher in the fall of 1942, almost one year to the day later than his contract originally called for. It was published in 1943 and is considered by at least one historian to be Morgan's most significant book. During the summer of 1942, in addition to working on the Humboldt book, he also read and critiqued his old faculty advisor Wallace Stegner's new manuscript of *Mormon Country*. Morgan already displayed the powerful work ethic that dominated the rest of his career.

Anyone else writing the story of the Humboldt, a river almost no one has ever heard of, would have produced only an extended essay. However, Morgan wrote it as a three hundred and fifty page book filled with mountain men, Mormons, gold seekers, immigrants and miners, among others. His book has twenty-two chapters with headings called *Desert Wayfarer, To the Pacific, Destiny's Son, The Epic of Starvation, The Golden Army and The Trail of Shining Steel*. Gary Topping, Associate Professor of History at Salt Lake Community College and Archivist for the Catholic Archdiocese of Salt Lake City, says that "one could easily argue that *The Humboldt* was Morgan's masterpiece". Morgan's writing made the river live and he used the river to write about a variety of early western historical figures and incidents. Topping called the book "a masterful historical synthesis and an unforgettable literary experience". He went on to say that "[t]he felicitous turn of phrase, the telling example, the vivid description, leap out from every page".

In 1942, ready to leave the Utah Writer's Project and the confining atmosphere of Utah, Morgan accepted a job with the Office of Price Administration in Washington, DC. He told one of his friends that he needed "to become external to Utah for a while and look the place over from a distance". Washington exposed him to a new world of libraries, including the Library of Congress, and research facilities that were not available to him in Utah.

Based on the success of the *Rivers of America*, another publisher sought to do a series on American lakes and approached Morgan, because of his *Humboldt* book, to write a book on the Great Salt Lake. Morgan started working on this, as he did on everything else, with an eye toward historical accuracy that resulted in the kind of meticulous research evidenced in all his books. Morgan began traveling the east coast looking in libraries for information relevant to his book, while maintaining a full time job with the Office of Price Administration. By the fall of 1945, he had completed his research and began writing the manuscript, which was due to be delivered to the publisher, Bobbs-Merrill, on April 1, 1946.

Morgan was so involved in his subject that the book, which should have been 60,000 words, soon became over 100,000 words and was growing. By the summer of 1946 he was still writing, and began taking a couple of days during the week as vacation days to

work on his book. By October 1, four chapters were still not finished despite the fact that he was working weekends and late into the night to finish. At that point, the book had grown to 150,000 words. The publisher's reaction to the first draft was that "from the point of view of historical scholarship, I think this manuscript easily tops the series to date". However, they asked him to cut 17,243 words. By November of 1946, Morgan completed the task of pruning the words but had driven himself almost to the point of exhaustion. He also needed to finish the maps. The publisher, realizing how hard Morgan had pushed himself on this book, wrote that "I wish to pay tribute to your apparently indefatigable energy; I hope you won't overtax it". The book, *The Great Salt Lake*, was finally published in the spring of 1947.

Ray Allen Billington, writing in the introduction to a 1973 reprinting of *The Great Salt Lake*, calls the book a "masterful history and description of the Utah countryside" and goes on to say that it is "as informative and authoritative today as when it was first printed". Billington says that Morgan not only produced a modern history but he produced fresh new information "scarcely to be expected in a volume designed for popular consumption". The new information that Morgan uncovered included information that the early Spanish traders knew about the Great Salt Lake, information on the early traders who came into the Great Basin, a study of the cartography before 1825, explaining Armijo's significance in determining the course of the Spanish Trail, describing Fremont's route in 1845 and the overland immigrants' route in 1846, describing the Mormon route in 1847, explaining the extent of Mormon exploration in 1848, clarifying the history of Jean Baptiste, identifying the early plans for the Lucin Cutoff and introducing new material on explorer Miles Goodyear.

After *The Great Salt Lake* was published, Morgan received a Guggenheim Fellowship to produce a comprehensive history of Mormonism, and quit the OPA in late 1947. The Guggenheim grant, although it was not much money, allowed him to visit libraries and Mormon historical sites in the east to do the research that he considered necessary for such an important and serious task. After two years of intensive research, during which he read and transcribed all of the newspaper articles in the Library of Congress relating to the early history of Mormonism, he was ready to begin writing the Mormon history, but then learned that his Fellowship with Guggenheim was not being renewed. With no job or sponsor, he could not afford to continue the project and decided to return to Utah. Before returning, however, he did obtain an advance of \$750 from Farrar & Reinhart for his book on Mormon history.

Utah was not fruitful in terms of employment or his continuing research on the Mormonism book so Morgan again returned to Washington, DC. He said to a friend, "The year and a half I have spent in Utah has graphically demonstrated to me that it is wholly unrealistic of me to try to maintain myself here...What it amounts to is that I should either have to give up the writing of histories for which I have prepared myself through so many years, or be content to live forever at a worse than substandard subsistence level."

For the next few years, Morgan managed to eke out a living from various sources, including writing book reviews for the Saturday Review of Literature and writing summaries in catalogues for a New York rare book dealer. He was under pressure from Farrar to repay the \$750 advance, and finally, in desperation, he approached Bobbs-Merrill for an advance to write a book about Jedediah Smith. Bobbs-Merrill agreed, and after repaying Farrar, he began writing the Jedediah Smith biography.

Because of the research and accumulation of mountains of material that had accompanied his previous projects, Morgan did not need to do any additional research to write this book. He sat down to write with his research at hand and *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* was completed and published in 1953. As previously stated, this book is a classic of western US history and brings the life and experiences of this bold explorer alive on the written page with Morgan's unique descriptive writing ability. His exhaustive research highlights numerous details about Smith and the fur trade. As one reviewer stated: "It is universally acknowledged as one of the best books on any aspect of western history, and for almost a half-century it has occupied an unimpeachable place on the reading list of nearly every western history course".

Morgan managed to combine his laser beam focus on researching sources and produced a compelling adventure story told as a very interesting narrative containing facts and side stories of events and people. It was much more than just a Smith biography. It describes the very early exploration of the west as well as the life of a fascinating and important player in the early days of the Rocky Mountain fur trade. Smith not only lived the daily life of a trapper, but also led explorations that opened new territory to future settlement. Before his death, he became a company owner with the responsibilities for his men and their livelihood.

Ray Allen Billington has concluded that Morgan's work on *The Humboldt*, *The Great Salt Lake* and *Jedediah Smith* allowed him to discover that he was "both by inclination and instinct, a historian's historian, less concerned with reaching a wide audience than with locating a revealing document, refuting hoary legends, and recording the events of the past as they had actually happened, however few those who cared to read... He would spend his life reading and writing about the Far West, stressing especially the story of Mormonism and the fur trade that opened that vast hinterland to occupation."

Not long after the completion of *Jedediah Smith*, Morgan was offered a job with the University of California's Bancroft Library as editor and resident historian, a job that he held until his death. Working at the Bancroft Library was the perfect job for a person with Morgan's interests and abilities. Here was a library with an extensive collection of manuscripts concerning early western history and he got paid to do what he loved and was really good at--reading, researching and writing about the Rocky Mountain west. The enormous amount of material written by Morgan after he took the Bancroft job demonstrates just how good this fit really was for both Morgan and the Library.

Morgan's first assignment for the Library was to catalogue their manuscript collection, which he worked on over the years, along with his other projects, and finally produced

the first volume in 1963, *Guide to the Manuscript Collection of the Bancroft Library*. However, his interest in western history and work ethic would not allow Morgan to concentrate on just one project. As a follow up to his Jedediah Smith book, he collaborated with Carl Wheat to produce what has become his most rare and collectible book, *Jedediah Smith and his Maps of the American West*, published by the California Historical Society in 1954. This book contains copies of three original Smith maps which are folded in a pocket on the inside back cover.

The collaboration with Carl Wheat on the Jedediah Smith maps led to another collaboration on a five volume work, *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861*, published in 1957 under Wheat's name. Saunders states that Morgan was an unofficial editor and researcher for Wheat, and his contributions to the series are recognized in the forewords to the individual volumes. Due to Wheat's illness, Morgan actually wrote the fifth volume and part of volume four relating to the Mormon maps.

In addition to his own writings, Morgan also acted as an editor for a number of journals, diaries and letters relating to the Overland Trail and the fur trade. His first publication as editor was *The Overland Diary of James A. Pritchard from Kentucky to California in 1849. With a Biography of Captain James A. Pritchard by Hugh Pritchard Williamson*. Saunders, in his bibliography, says of Morgan, "His attention to detail is manifest throughout the copious notes, but is best shown by the table at the conclusion comparing the travel schedules of every known diarist on the South Pass route in 1849". Gary Kurutz, in his descriptive bibliography of the California Gold Rush, ranks it as one of the most important gold rush diaries both "because of Pritchard's observations, but also because of the scholarship of the editor Dale Morgan".

This was followed the next year, 1960, by *California As I Saw It: Pencillings by the Way of Its Gold and Gold Diggers! And Incidents of Travel by Land and Water*. The book includes a biographical essay about the author, William S. McCollum, and a bibliography by Morgan of similar Gold Rush diaries.

In 1963, Morgan edited *Overland in 1846*, a two volume compilation of the primary sources relating to the Overland Trail in 1846, the first year of the immigration from the east to California and Oregon. Morgan, as thorough as ever, breaks his sources down by each specific overland trail. Saunders calls it the "richest gathering of material relating to the beginnings of overland travel". This was followed in 1964 with two overland entries. *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California*, Fremont's memoirs of his explorations in California, which he edited with Allan Nevins, and *Three Years in California: William Perkins' Journal of Life at Sonora, 1849-1852*, with an introduction and annotations by Morgan and James R. Scobie.

1964 was also the publication date of what Morgan considered his most significant historical work, *The West of William H. Ashley: The International Struggle for the Fur Trade of the Missouri, the Rocky Mountains, and the Columbia, with Explorations Beyond the Continental Divide, Recorded in the Diaries and Letters of William H. Ashley and his Contemporaries, 1822-1838*. Representing Morgan at his best, the book is a

compilation of diaries, letters, newspaper items and other primary sources relating to the activities of the Missouri Fur Company, which was initially formed by Ashley and later sold to Jedediah Smith, David Jackson and William Sublette. The book also documents the subsequent activities of Ashley relating to the fur trade up until his death in 1838. This book was so important to Morgan that he wanted to have it considered for a Pulitzer Prize for 1964, but it was unfortunately submitted past the deadline and was not considered.

Continuing with his interest in the fur trade, in 1965 he collaborated with Charles Kelly to revise and update a biography first written by Kelly in 1936. Morgan offered to provide Kelly with a number of corrections, and that collaboration resulted in *Old Greenwood: The Story of Caleb Greenwood, Trapper, Pathfinder and Early Pioneer*. This book includes an eight page bibliography by Morgan, a thirty page appendix on narratives of the 1844 emigration to California and a fold out map of California-Oregon Trails.

Morgan and George P. Hammond edited a book published by Friends of Bancroft Library, *Captain Charles M. Weber: Pioneer of the San Joaquin and Founder of Stockton, California* in 1966. Morgan also edited a book in that year for Lakeside Classics, *Honolulu: Sketches of Life in the Hawaiian Islands from 1828 to 1861*, an autobiography written by a missionary wife.

In 1969, it was back to the fur trade and a book involving the diary and narrative history of a fur trapper, *The Rocky Mountain Journals of William Marshall Anderson: The West in 1834*, which he co-edited with Eleanor Towles Harris. The significance of this book is that almost half of the 403 pages is his "Galaxy of Mountain Men", a series of biographical sketches of some of the more important figures in the Rocky Mountain fur trade. Saunders describes this book as "a significant encyclopedic source for the study of the American fur trade era".

He also edited another Lakeside Classic book in 1967, *Three Years in the Klondike*, which was the first historical narrative by a participant in the early years of the great Klondike gold rush. Morgan acknowledged that some of the facts are not always accurate but its importance is that it was the first one written.

Morgan's last significant book was published in 1979 and was the narrative of Howard Calhoun Gardiner, a gold miner who came to California via Cape Horn in 1849. *In Pursuit of the Golden Dream: Reminiscences of San Francisco and the Northern and Southern Mines, 1849-57* contains an introduction by Morgan that includes an extensive bibliographic essay on the northern mines, something that had not been done before.

Dale Morgan died of cancer, while on a tour of eastern libraries, on March 30, 1971, at the age of fifty-six. It is generally accepted by those who knew him and those who have studied his life that at the time of his death he was working on three significant writing projects. The first was an authoritative single volume history of the fur trade that he had been periodically working on since the publication of *Jedediah Smith*, but was constantly

being put on hold so he could pursue his other more pressing and less time consuming projects.

The second was a comprehensive bibliography of Mormon source materials which he had begun on file cards in the 1940's while working at the Utah Writer's Project and which he had continued while living in Washington, D.C. and continued to update at various other times. At some point he gave his materials to the Utah State Historical Society which had agreed to update it and keep it current for him. Unfortunately, the historical society did not have the staff or the money to get the bibliography published so at the time of his death it was still unpublished. Sometime after his death, Chad Flake, the Brigham Young University Librarian, did edit, update and publish it under the title, *A Mormon Bibliography, 1830-1930*.

Last, but not least, he had intended for many years to write a factual and comprehensive history of the Mormon Church. He began his work on it with the Guggenheim Fellowship, but when the money ran out, he was never able to find the backing or the time to complete the history. This unfinished project was given some exposure in 1986 when John Phillip Walker published seven chapters from his writings found in the Morgan papers at the University of Utah Library and the Bancroft Library. Walker also included selected Morgan correspondence regarding Mormon history. Walker's book, *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History*, gives the reader a good idea of how Morgan might have written his history of Mormonism.

Wallace Stegner, writing after Morgan's death, said, "It's a great loss, he was so fine a scholar that almost one's first thought is of the unwritten book--and not only the Mormon one but the fur trade one. And that's heartless, really, because he was also so fine and decent and generous and long-suffering a man that one should think of that person we've lost and not the books."

Although he never married, in the later years of his life he did develop a relationship that had him contemplating marriage. Not too long before he died, Morgan wrote two letters to his friend and fellow historian Fawn Brodie that relate information regarding his relationship with Louise Hunt, an old friend from his days at the Office of Price Administration, whose current job was with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. He first mentions Ms. Hunt in a letter dated December 24, 1969 where he tells Brodie that he proposed to her a couple of months earlier and reminding Brodie that her first husband had died in 1964. In a follow up letter, dated May 13, 1970, he related the problems he was having trying to work out with his love interest, who lived in Maryland, how they could get together in one place and whether she would be willing to move to California. Unfortunately, Morgan died before they could work out the issues of their relationship.

It is interesting that the Morgan papers, when they were stored at the Bancroft Library after his death, filled over one hundred crates. This material represented thirty-five years of research and study that constitute a "priceless legacy" from one of the influential figures in the study of western history. In his memorial tribute to Morgan in the Utah

Historical Quarterly, Dr. Everett Cooley, Curator of Western Americana at the University of Utah, said of him: "Dale Morgan was a man of many ideas and more projects for himself and others to do than could be undertaken in a half dozen lifetimes...Dale compressed more projects into his short life than many of us would do if we were given a dozen lives."

Dale Morgan's writing career spanned just over thirty-seven years, most of them spent at the Bancroft Library. His influence on western history is significant even after the passage of nearly forty years since his death. During his lifetime he was recognized by his fellow historians with awards from the Utah State Historical Society, the California Historical Society, the American Association for State and Local History (twice), the Utah Alumni Association and the New York Westerners.

Not only did Morgan produce a wealth of published material, he was also engaged in written conversations with numerous colleagues during his lifetime offering stories, observations, ideas and new information he had uncovered on topics of mutual interest. Not being able to verbalize his ideas, he was a prolific correspondent and would have been delighted by the emails of today.

It is evident from Morgan's letters and papers that he was a frequent correspondent with many other historians and that he influenced and helped them in many ways. One of his close friends, Utah historian Juanita Brooks, said of him, "No one ever asked advice or direction from him without receiving it. He has consistently encouraged writers and furnished both factual material and expert criticism. The whole field of historical research has been greatly enriched by this man." Whatever his historical legacy is, he had significant influence beyond his own writings.

The Saunders' bibliography of Dale Morgan's writings lists sixty-three books that were written, edited or introduced by Morgan and seventy of his articles that were published in journals or magazines. This remarkable achievement is by itself impressive, but his contribution is even more extraordinary because all of his work includes minutely detailed research with thoroughly documented footnotes, extensive bibliographies and newly discovered material. While some of his books are collectible rarities now, it was not always so.

This hearing impaired former Mormon left a considerable mark on the history of the west based on his ability to write interesting history, an overarching desire to search out historical facts, his willingness to spend numerous hours researching minor topics, his capacity to work harder and longer than others and his unflagging interest in the early American west. His name is not well known today, but Dale L. Morgan's extraordinary work has permanently enriched and expanded our understanding of western history.

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