Shoshonean Peoples and the Overland Trail

Smoak, Gregory, et al.
Shoshonean Peoples and the Overland Trail: Frontiers of the Utah Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1849–1869.

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tens of thousands of pages on a series of manual typewriters; he became familiar with the contents of hundreds of books at a level that approaches almost total recall. His formative years as both a researcher and as a writing historian, 1939–1954, were fueled by a drive to circumscribe the full record of his field. He positioned himself for completing great studies, but after accepting his Bancroft Library research position, his record of accomplishments seemed driven by job requirements and others’ work: Charles Kelly’s *Old Greenwood*, Carl Wheat’s *Mapping the Transmississippi West*, contracts from Rand-McNally and Ronald Baughman, and the constant demands of the Navajo Land Claims Case. There is little wonder he had time for his own work. And there was so much good stuff out there! The remarkable overland diary of William B. Lorton, botanist Joseph Burke’s letters, a Robert Campbell collection of fur trade letters and other documentation, a John C. Frémont biography, the exploration diaries of Howard Stansbury and John Gunnison—each of these chewed up his time and resources across years. None were ever finished; some were not even “started” if measured by the typical practice of compiling notes and knocking out drafts.

The finished output of Morgan’s career should be understood as combinations of circumstance and opportunity. Morgan never prepared for a career in history. Partly because he was self-taught, partly because he was insulated by his deafness, he was so driven by what he could do toward factual accuracy and the Holy Grail of historicism—completeness—that he was constantly being drawn down some topical cross-path. Professionally and emotionally, Dale Morgan reached a point when he was really prepared to write “substantive” history only toward the end of his career, just when he was beset by his own foreshortened mortality. That someone who had such a grip on his source material and wrote such important work could be said to be unprepared or unfinished seems somewhat sacrilegious, but Dale himself he recognized and fretted over his inability to land in a circumstance where he could focus appropriately.

Morgan realized that when he worked on the subject of this collection he was essentially stepping around the very edges of his field. His interest in Indian relations grew out of deeper motivations. First, it was nourished from interest in the development of Mormon relations with the federal government during Utah’s early territoriality. This soon evolved to include conflicts over emigrant river ferries, the control of trade along the trail, the encroachment of Mormon settlers into Shoshoni lands, and which finally drew in the circumstances faced by migrant companies along the California trail. Morgan pursued research in what today would be considered Native American history chiefly because it was one aspect of American emigration westward and regional settlement. He was interested in what academic historians of his day generally regarded as a subject proper only for promoters, buffs, and amateurs: local history. But Morgan's work
is important precisely because it is among the earliest research to address the practical interactions of Great Basin tribes, travelers, and settlers. The story of the Utah Superintendency chiefly concerns relations with the federal government, the Shoshoni (as they had the clearest contact with emigrants), and the Utes (who were most closely affected by the Mormon settlement corridor in Wasatch Front valleys). Morgan’s work provides at least a summary view of relations with all three, as well as at least an introduction to contacts with Gosiutes and Paiutes of central and southern Utah. The documentary series, and both articles indirectly, address the ways the Shoshoni adapted to the overland trail through their region and settlement in its valleys. Utah’s first governor and superintendent of Indian affairs, Brigham Young, was exceedingly pleased that Utah experienced less violent conflict with Native peoples than other territories. His aphorism that it was “cheaper to feed the Indians than fight them” became a recurring motif of personal histories, folklore, and modern inspirational fictions about the pioneer period. However, Superintendent Young’s observation flatly avoids asking the embarrassing question of precisely why the Indians should have to be either fed or fought. Over and over through his work, Morgan’s narrative and documentary selections suggest that American settlers largely ignored what did not serve their purposes, acting as culturally self-assured as their European forebears, regarding frontier land populated by native bands as unused and unoccupied. It was—by their cultural standards. For Young and Utah’s settlers the simple facts were that 1) “this is the right place,” and 2) the desert would “blossom as the rose.” Just why and how was immaterial; they were there to be sure it did. The needs of no other people or entity were substantial enough to weigh against those points—period. Certainly, in his injunction to feed rather than fight, Young chose the better of the two options. He deserves credit for a kinder, gentler conquest, but his statement remains appallingly smug.

If the Sweetwater miners and the farmers in valley settlements wanted merely to be left alone, so did native people. The problem was that they could not coexist, each on their own cultural terms, without compromising the other’s very means of subsistence. It was left to Jacob Forney to pin down the major point of conflict. Illustrating it in both environmental and cultural terms, he noted that whites had settled first into the agriculturally suitable locations—the valley floors—ignoring the fact that these areas were key to nomadic survival. “Game cannot exist [in numbers sufficient to sustain a nomadic population] except in the fertile watered valleys,” Forney wrote the department. “[T]hese, documents 26, 30, 38 this collection.

Ironically, in practical terms, federal policy and regulations affected Indian agents directly but native peoples only indirectly; both groups were affected far more than the white emigrants or settlers that were Morgan’s chief interest.
with few exceptions are occupied by a thrifty population, and, consequently, the game is exterminated.” Putting the Shoshonis’ dilemma into a modern context, constructing permanent settlements in their mountain valleys was like removing the meat counter, dairy case, bread aisle, vegetable section, and canned foods from the local groceries to make space for apartment development, and offering a new supply of men’s and women’s wear in a neighboring county as compensation. The Shoshonis and Utes with horse-borne mobility therefore began cultivating the new resources in their Great Basin valleys—the settlements themselves. “They [the Indians] fully realize the effect produced by settlement, taking possession of their most valuable hunting ground,” concluded Forney, “and [therefore] begging and plunder, seem to them not only Justifiable but their only alternative.”

While Morgan documents Young’s pragmatic approach to settling differences with Indians, he grasped early in his research that it was not the only challenge facing the Indian superintendency. A coincident problem was a naïvely self-assured cultural assumption made by the federal office of Indian Affairs, namely, that written agreements adequately resolved the fundamental conflict between a nomadic hunter-gatherer economy and a competing economy of fixed-location, technological agriculture. Treaty law, however, was “essentially an exercise in distancing and exclusion,” wrote one British author recently, “Although US law recognized the tribes as distinct nations, there was no plan to accommodate them or to integrate them as such within the constitution of the republic. Rather, if there was a plan, it was for their members, individually or as families, to become citizens and householder of the republic.”

It is frustrating to encounter now the contradictions explicit in these letters, such as Document 99. In that missive Commissioner Dole writes—with apparent sympathy—of the Indians’ natural discontent over white settlement, but then, without a flicker of similar conscience, discusses terms for extinguishing native peoples’ “title to the soil.” Evidently it was fine for Indians to be the historic occupants of the land so long as they were willing to leave on demand. Neither side welcomed conflict and the desire for treaties of peace rings genuine, but the land treaties seem chiefly to allow whites to feel good about dispossessing native inhabitants. To federal authorities, moving white settlers or limiting (or prohibiting) mining was simply inconceivable. Both were as right, as inevitable, and as controllable as weather. “I think that a treaty with the various tribes of Indians in Utah, would be productive of much good,” Jacob Holeman noted early on. “[I]t would have the effect of preventing degradations

5  Document 54.
on their lands, quieting their excitement against the whites and ultimately save the Government from much trouble and expense.”

Circumstances proved otherwise.

The frustration of the Indian agents virtually oozes from Morgan’s work. There was never enough money to function responsibly, the time lag between communicating offices was measured in months, and the federal bureaucrats just did not grasp the scale of Western space and challenges. Mormons and non-Mormons were mutually suspicious of the other side’s intents. Interpreters and settlers were often as opportunistic as they were helpful, and the Indian bands had difficulty grasping the nature of the change flooding into the regions they frequented. Despite their intentions, no treaty provision ever resolved hunger pangs, particularly given the nature of transcontinental shipping, which the agents almost always lamented, cajoled, and warned had delayed annuity distributions.

Cultures were bound to collide. That they did not do so more frequently and more forcibly is testament to the fundamental wisdom of Young’s policy as applied by the settlers, the committed service and vigorous activity of the federal Indian agents in Utah, and the persuasive leadership of Washakie and other Native leaders who realized open conflict was potentially suicidal. It is difficult to see a happy ending in the displacement of the Shoshoni from their historic areas, but they did not endure the fate of the Pequot, the Cherokee, or the Modoc.

Had he time and inclination, Morgan might have produced for posterity studies as full and insightful as any of his overland trail or fur trade works. What he did leave, however, is an outline of early Indian relations in the Great Basin that remains as important and useful today as when he wrote over five decades ago. He illustrated not only the time but also the fundamental perspectives, choices, and accountabilities that underpin today’s discussions of rights and responsibilities. While his articles each have their limitations, Dale L. Morgan’s works on the overland trail and the Shoshoni remain substantial, valuable, and pioneering works on their own merit.

Dale L. Morgan and the Study of Indian Affairs

Dale L. Morgan (1914–1971) is chiefly remembered for seminal studies on the American fur trade and central-route overland trail. Between 1943 and his death in 1971, Morgan produced some of the best-documented, most lucid, and readable narratives of the early American West. However, Morgan's wide-ranging historical interests included virtually every topic intersecting his subject of the moment. He explained to John Caughey of *Pacific Historical Review* that his investigation of Indian policy was “one of the byproducts of the researches I have carried on in Mormon history during the past ten years.”\(^1\) Each of the works collected here was just such a by-product, one among scores of interesting, I'm-sure-I-could-get-it-done-(relatively)-quickly projects that tugged ceaselessly at his attention throughout a frenetically busy career. Each of Morgan's works on Indian affairs was a natural extension of general historical research or other writing project, but they stand as examples of the path-breaking work he could generate almost at will. They are collected for the first time in this volume.\(^2\)

Dale Morgan fell into history quite accidentally. He grew up in a Latter-day Saint family on the south side of Salt Lake City, the oldest of four children. His mother, Emily Holmes Morgan, became a widow when Dale was five. Nine years later, a bacterial meningitis infection damaged Morgan's aural nerves, leaving him totally and irreversibly deaf. While his mental abilities remained unaffected, deafness was in the 1930s what it is today—perhaps the most socially isolating physical disability. Throughout his life Morgan's innate talent and abilities consistently opened doors, only to have potential employers' doubts about his handicap frequently shut them again.

At 18, a year older than his classmates due to his illness, he emerged from high school displaying a knack for drawing and layout and planned for a career in commercial advertising. Despite graduating from the University of Utah with a BA degree in Art in 1937, Morgan found white-collar jobs a scarce commodity in Depression-era Salt Lake City—especially for a deaf man. A year after he graduated from college, unable to find work in advertising anywhere in the West at

1 Morgan to John Caughey, 1948 May 5, Morgan Papers.
2 Between 1953 and the early 1960s, Morgan also conducted contractual documentary research for *Healing v. Jones*, the land claim case between the Navajo and Hopi tribes. Since it generated files of collected primary documentation rather than a secondary essay or published compilation, that material is not included in this collection.
any level, Morgan acted on a job tip from a friend in the summer of 1938 and was hired as a “non-certified” employee (i.e., someone not listed on the welfare roles) by the state branch of the Historical Records Survey (HRS). The HRS was one of many Depression-era government projects in Franklin Roosevelt’s “alphabet soup” of recovery programs. It employed former office workers inventorying and documenting the volume and condition of public and historical records existing in county court houses and community institutions, like churches.

Morgan’s responsibilities were initially editorial. He had written and edited work for the Utah Chronicle, the University of Utah's student paper, and was a member of the campus literary society and contributor to its magazine. He did not, however, take even a single class that would have prepared him for a career as an editor or historian. Morgan was hired on raw talent. At the HRS, his duties were initially to review and suggest improvements for historical essays being written for guides to county records. The haphazardly researched and poorly written submissions he was called upon to edit, the strength of his own ability to remember and organize facts, facility with good writing, and his drive for accuracy, quickly drew the responsibilities for directing historical essays to his desk. The resulting improvement garnered attention during reviews in the national offices as well. Within two years he was hired by the state Writers’ Project, first to superintend compilation of the state guidebook, and then, as the project’s director. The practical experience of service as an HRS and Writers’ Project editor was gained on the job. On-the-job remained the only “training” Morgan ever received on being a researcher and historian.3

His early practical experience, with Utah's history narrated county by county, tied Morgan to a strong sense of geographic reality. He remained forever after a local or regional historian. Whatever the subject, Dale Morgan’s work was always grounded in documentary sources concerning the immediate actions of individuals or discrete groups at specific times in particular places. Interpreting the sweep of large cultural ideas or movements and comparative interpretation was foreign to him. Being a regionalist, lacking any academic training in history, yet consumed by work in the primary material of his topic, Dale Morgan seems to have remained completely unaffected by the stirrings in American historiography during the 1940s and 1950s. He simply did not read Daniel Boorstin, 3

Richard Hofstadter, or other writers who were beginning to look differently at the American past and, in the process, were laying the thematic foundations for the social history revolution of the 1960s. Morgan’s one attempt at comprehending the nation’s broad context came in the mid 1940s and consisted of research toward an intended book on American culture at the point of Mormon emergence. His preparation, however, seems to have been limited to extensive primary source research. There is no indication that he ever broadened his reading to include the work of other historians, chiefly because that project was abandoned in the early 1950s. It never progressed to the point of drafting, and Morgan did not sketch outlines or make preliminary notes. It is tempting to wonder whether he could have carried off such a book. The result certainly would have been closer in style and substance to his *The Humboldt: Highroad to the West* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943) and *The Great Salt Lake* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947) and the modern popular works of writers like Stephen Ambrose or Shelby Foote than to an academic treatise—well informed, but written for a general readership.⁴

Work for the Historical Records Survey and Writers’ Project introduced the gangly essay editor to a generous, spectacled former journalist from Ogden who had served as the director of the Utah Writers’ Project at its inception in 1935. Maurice L. Howe continued a consultancy for the Utah project by mail after his transfer to the national office in Washington, D. C. As their professional worlds overlapped, Howe, who harbored a personal fascination for all things relating to the early American West, and Morgan, who was beginning down a similar path, kindled a close friendship. In early August 1939, Howe wrote Morgan about a point that had frustrated both of them. Citing W. J. Ghent’s 1931 book *The Early Far West: A Narrative Outline, 1540–1850* as the only reasonable compilation touching the topic, Howe noted, “I have never [found] between the covers of one volume, a list, year by year, giving the place, the date, and the principal leaders and other data, of each rendezvous of the mountain men (trappers).” Howe proposed that the two of them produce the volume.⁵ Almost as an afterthought, he also mentioned that he had once assigned a number of Writers’ Project workers to comb through records of the Utah Indian Superintendency at the National Archives. Two weeks later a bundle

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⁴ Morgan also seemed to be unaffected by the rise of Western regionalism in the work of contemporaries like Walter Prescott Webb, Earl Pomeroy, or Gerald Nash. Surprisingly, he was an active member of the Western History Association and attended its conferences annually, despite being entirely unable to hear a word of the proceedings.

arrived in Morgan’s daily mail containing transcripts from superintendency documents dating between 1856 and 1859. At this point, it would be nearly ten very busy years before Morgan generated his first work on Indian relations in the *Pacific Historical Review*, and another four beyond that before commencing the Shoshoni documents series in *Annals of Wyoming*, but the sheaf of Howe’s transcripts were significant. The handful of transcriptions constituted Dale Morgan’s introduction to the richness of federal record series regarding the American West. Personal commitment to the agreement between the two men was the linchpin that hitched Morgan to the study of the West.

Morgan’s involvement with Indian affairs was almost jumpstarted the following year. In 1941, he was in the throes of pushing *Utah: A Guide to the State* through the final steps of publication. Sociologist Nels Anderson had written University of Utah professor Leland Creer suggesting that either the state Historical Records Survey or the Writers’ Project pursue a history of Mormon-Indian-non-Mormon relations during the territorial period. The idea was passed along to Morgan, who liked it immensely. He knew, however, that to pursue the project locally would be impossible without the willing cooperation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church Historian’s Office held not only the massive bulk of papers generated by Brigham Young, territorial governor and superintendent of Indian affairs between 1850 and 1857, but also other contemporary records from Mormons who served as translators, Indian agents, teamsters, and common settlers, which would be critical for contextual research.

On one of his periodic visits to the church’s Administration Building, Morgan sat down with assistant church historian A. William Lund and proposed the venture informally. The idea was to produce a documentary volume of Indian-related records similar to *The State of Deseret*, an HRS publication from 1940 based on a large collection of transcribed documents with a lengthy historical introduction and a raft of explanatory notes. Maurice Howe’s superintendency transcripts, although limited, was evidence that a substantial and historically rich pool of source material existed. Lund said he would take up the matter with the church historian, apostle Joseph Fielding Smith. Though a few more conversations were held with various people who could be either helpful or influential, Morgan’s attention was drawn elsewhere by other demands. He did not follow up on the conversation, and the prospective Writers’ Project volume of Indian-related documents got no further than the talking stage.  

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6 A detailed list appears behind the transmittal letter, Howe to Morgan, 1939 Aug. 16, Morgan Papers. In a later note Howe claimed to have transcripts of “hundreds of letters relating to Utah Indians.” Cf. Howe to Morgan, 1939 Sep. 13, Morgan Papers.  
7 Nels Anderson to Leland Creer, 1941 Feb. 14; Morgan to Howe, 1941 May 1, Morgan Papers. *Utah Historical Quarterly* published “The State of Deseret,” a consideration of Utah’s earliest political organization, was published in 1940 as a monographic three-number
A year later, by the summer of 1942, the state guidebook was out. In October, wanting badly to step beyond his native culture, Morgan resigned his post and determined to move to Washington, D. C. to see what he could do for the war effort. He arrived in Washington early in the month, certain that in the burgeoning wartime capitol he could find work. Deafness and his inevitable 4–F draft classification guaranteed that he would never be drafted and was thus available to an employer “for the duration.” It was then that Howe's introduction to the Utah Superintendency of Indian Affairs began paying off. Between his efforts toward securing a job Morgan began visiting both the National Archives and Library of Congress and worked busily cleaning up research and polishing the manuscript for *The Humboldt: Highroad to the West*. Though the Humboldt was entirely a Nevada river, the political geography of Nevada put it in Utah Territory during the overland period. Already primed with Howe's transcripts, in his free time Morgan threw himself directly into the Utah Superintendency records at the National Archives, looking for documentation of native peoples’ interactions with emigrating Americans passing along the Humboldt. Frankly, interaction with native peoples was only one challenge of many along the trail, and not a significant one at that, but it tended to be recorded when it happened and provided excellent benchmarks for tracing movement along the trail. Some of that data informed *Humboldt*, but in his book Morgan only scratched the surface of Indian affairs in the Great Basin.8

Finally, in December 1942, two months after arriving in the wartime capitol, Morgan was hired for a minor editorial position in the central offices of the Office of Price Administration (OPA), one of several federal departments established to maintain national economic stability during the Second World

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8 Dale L. Morgan, *The Humboldt: Highroad to the West* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943). Several chapters touch on Indian relations but “Trail to California” and “To the Pacific,” chaps. 5 and 6, contain the most detailed treatments.
Richard L. Saunders

War. A week after landing his OPA position, Morgan shipped the manuscript for *Humboldt* to his publisher and turned to other research. As early as April 1943, Morgan was buried back in the federal Indian affairs records in his free time, reading virtually every report, letter, petition, or invoice in the files relating to Western Indian agencies during the overland period. He had already covered a good part of the material dealing with Nevada tribes while cutting the manuscript and proofing galleys and pages for *Humboldt*, but the opportunity to glean other materials of interest was too valuable to miss. He began abstracting or transcribing dozens of documents for his files. Once the Utah and then Nevada Superintendency records had been culled, the process was repeated through the St. Louis Superintendency files. Morgan took away reams of painstaking transcriptions from these early superintendents’ records—nearly 800 pages of closely typed text, carefully hammered out on a portable typewriter. What he would do with that stack of source material wasn’t exactly certain, but it was good stuff.

Just as he was completing the Utah Superintendency records, a timely letter arrived from a good friend in Salt Lake City. Marguerite Sinclaire was officially the Utah State Historical Society secretary but functioned as its managing director in practice. The society’s journal, the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, was looking ahead to new projects and someone suggested producing a volume focusing on Indians in Utah. The suggestion caught Morgan at a good point, while unencumbered by a writing project. Through the fall he drafted and revised an article on Brigham Young as an Indian affairs administrator, drawn primarily from his transcripts of Interior Department and Office of Indian Affairs documents. In late December 1944, Morgan submitted the forty-page manuscript with strict instructions that its length was not to be cut without his stated permission.

As luck would have it, by the time Morgan’s submission arrived in Salt Lake City, *Quarterly* editor J. Cecil Alter was ill and out of commission. The society’s authoritarian Board of Directors chairman, Herbert Auerbach, offhandedly charged Marguerite Sinclair to keep the journal moving editorially. When Morgan’s manuscript arrived she sent it to readers without troubling the incapacitated Alter. Returning from a trip to New York and finding that she had actually gone ahead with publication plans, Auerbach exploded in a board meeting, livid that anything involving *Quarterly* publication would be acted upon.

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9 The office in the Gateway City had directed relations with Western Indians since the days of William Clark and frequently retained routine material that might not survive elsewhere. Morgan’s original Indian Affairs transcripts can be found in carton 21, folders 1–8 (68:11–805 on the microfilm), Morgan Papers.

10 Morgan to Marguerite Sinclair, 1944 Dec. 22, Utah WPA Papers, Utah State Historical Society (hereafter UHi), Salt Lake City, Utah. The manuscript is not among his papers at the Bancroft Library and given expansive work done on it later, this initial draft likely does not survive.
without the editor’s explicit approval. He flatly refused to allow further editorial work or commitments to proceed under any other circumstance. As the society’s wealthiest supporter and the dominant force on the board, Auerbach’s will was inviolate in society matters, and editorial consideration of “Brigham Young as Indian Agent” and other manuscripts ceased entirely. Morgan’s submission was reconsidered when work picked up again following Auerbach’s unexpected death in the spring of 1945, but the manuscript fell to one side. After a year, Morgan requested his manuscript be returned.  

Dale Morgan’s foray into the Utah Superintendency history had a complicated back story to consider. Under Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, the states surrendered to the federal government all responsibility for treating with foreign nations and the continent’s native peoples. In 1789, the latter responsibility was specifically assigned to the War Department. For sixty years, until just as news of the discovery of California placer gold was breaking in the East, the U.S. Army fought (quite literally) to administer Indian policy. With the Ordinance of 1787, Congress had made the appointment as superintendent of Indian affairs coincident with territorial governorship. By 1848, the entire responsibility for communicating federal policy in Indian affairs to the governors was assigned to merely five supervisory offices scattered across the continent in Minnesota, Oregon, Michigan, Missouri, and Mississippi. But by that point, westward expansion had seriously overstretched the office and a new administrative structure was needed. At the creation of the Department of the Interior in March 1849, the Office of Indian Affairs was transferred from the War Department to the newer entity. Little substantive change was effected by the reassignment other than a division of practical responsibilities in the field.

A year later, Utah Territory came into being. Established in the Compromise of 1850, Utah’s territorial boundaries took in all of present-day Utah, most of Nevada, Colorado west of the continental divide, and southwestern Wyoming below the Oregon border at the 42nd parallel. Commissioning new governments for Utah and New Mexico was virtually the first act toward organizing

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12 The Senate ratifies all treaties, and art. 1, § 8, cl. 3 gives Congress the power “To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;” United States Statutes at Large 4 (1846): 49; Alban W. Hoopes, Indian Affairs and Their Administration, with Special Reference to the Far West, 1849–1860 (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1932; New York: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 15–19; William M. Neil, “The Territorial Governor as Indian Superintendent,” Mississippi Valley Historical Review 43, no. 2 (Sep. 1956): 213–37. Unruh notes, “Although Congress authorized the separation of the two offices [governor and Indian superintendent] in 1857, the practice ended only gradually, the last combination terminating in 1871.” Unruh, Plains Across, 467 n. 82.
the interior territory acquired in the Mexican Cession. As part of Utah's grant of territorial status the Taylor administration provided for the creation of a new Indian superintendency under the direction of the chief western office in St. Louis, Missouri. Utah's new administration was specifically charged with overseeing Native relations with Mormon settlers and overland travelers. Thereafter, until 1864 and the arrival of Orsamus H. Irish as Utah's first separately functioning superintendent, the territory's governors were charged with regulating or mediating contacts between white emigrants and settlers and native inhabitants. The superintendents had general responsibility for groups across a territory or other political area, but specific duties were divided between agencies. Each agent (and sometimes one or two subagents) was responsible for one or more tribes and its roving bands.\(^\text{13}\)

The valleys and mountains rimming the Great Basin deserts were home to a thinly dispersed but diverse population. The Southern Paiutes, Northern Paiutes (two different peoples) and Western Shoshones, including the Gosiutes, populated the Great Basin deserts west and south of Salt Lake City. The Utes to the east, held mountains and valleys from the Wasatch to the Colorado Front Range. The Bannocks and the Northern and Eastern Shoshonis occupied the Snake River plain between Oregon's Blue Mountains and the broad swath of the upper Missouri and Green rivers in what is now western and central Wyoming. While the Shoshonis' heartland fell beyond Utah Territory—bands lived in or frequented Utah's northern valleys—everything north of Salt Lake City was essentially Shoshoni territory; the so-called Weber Utes, for example, were Shoshoni with an admixture of Gosiutes (actually Shoshoni themselves with a somewhat separate identity) and Utes. Beginning in 1836, Shoshoni bands regularly encountered emigrants along stretches of the Oregon Trail from Fort Laramie to the Oregon-California fork at City of Rocks, and all along the lower Snake, nearly a third of the trail's distance. Their official federal contact, the Oregon Superintendency, was hundreds of miles away in Oregon City, and the Washington Territorial Superintendency was just as far.\(^\text{14}\) Geographic reality determined it would be

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14 "In 1842 a subagency for the 'country West of the Rocky mountains' was established and located in the Willamette Valley. The Oregon Superintendency was established in 1848 when Oregon Territory was organized. It originally had jurisdiction over the entire area west of the Rocky Mountains and north of latitude 42° [i.e., the northern limit of the Mexican Cession and later, the Oregon-Utah Territorial boundary]. The territorial governor acted as the ex-officio superintendent until 1850 when a separate official was appointed. . . . When Washington Territory was established in 1853, a separate superintendency was established there with jurisdiction over the area north of the
the Mormon settlers, whose rapid settlement in Shoshoni hunting and wintering grounds exposed both sides to possible friction, who would be the primary contact. The Utah superintendent of Indian affairs therefore stood as the closest point of official contact for most of the Shoshonean peoples, and Territorial Utah created the most detailed records of that interaction's impact on the Shoshoni and Gosiutes.15

For someone like Morgan, working hard to understand the dynamics of movement along the overland trail, a study of records involving the Shoshoni was a natural step. Having skimmed through Indian affairs and the overland trail in *Humboldt*, with the forestalled Brigham Young article behind him, and having substantial source material then at hand, Morgan decided to probe deeper into western Indian affairs as it affected overland emigration. In 1946, he began drafting a lengthy new article, this one a more detailed study of Indian affairs along the Great Basin stretch of the California Trail. At the same time, he remained heavily engaged in primary research, looking for Mormon-related material and Western trail narratives in nineteenth-century newspapers. On rare free evenings and weekends between 1946 and 1948, Morgan added to and refined the draft. Over time the manuscript grew in such proportions that he finally divided it into three sections. In January 1948, he arrived at his mother's home in Salt Lake City from a transcontinental research trip on a Guggenheim fellowship. After polishing up the first manuscript of the three, he submitted it to the *Pacific Historical Review* as a consideration of Indian affairs administration in Utah between 1851 and 1858. It was accepted almost immediately, but the editor asked for the text to be cut to fit available space. Morgan did so in July, but at the expense of much of the historical detail, leaving chiefly the high points of his argument. The study appeared as his first scholarly publication in November 1948.16

Upon sending an offprint of the *Pacific Historical Review* article to BYU professor Wilford Poulson, Morgan explained plans for broadening his study of Indian affairs. He noted that his piece was “the first of several I mean to write when I can afford the luxury. The next one will deal with the period 1858–1861 [i.e., to the creation of the Nevada Superintendency], and the third with actual


An admirable historiography of Mormon relations with native peoples generally may be found in Sondra Jones, “Saints or Sinners?: The Evolving Perceptions of Mormon-Indian Relations in Utah’s Historiography,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 19–46.

15 Morgan to John Caughey, 1948 May 5 and Jul. 28, Morgan Papers.
administration by the agents along the California Trail throughout the period, 1851–58.” The final part was actually written before the intended second installment was even drafted. By 1949, the 1851–1858 manuscript had progressed through a corrected second draft; it was eventually sidelined in favor of income-producing work and was not published during Morgan’s lifetime. Taken from the corrected manuscript in Morgan’s papers, that final part appears after six decades in this collected volume of Morgan’s work as “Indian Affairs on the California Trail, 1849–1860.” Morgan’s intent to pursue the remaining Indian relations articles held firm for about two years, but circumstances dragged his available time and attention in different directions as he progressed with other research. The middle section, the succeeding piece to the Pacific Historical Review submission (concerning the trail’s Indian affairs administration between 1858 and 1861), was never written at all. After 1949, Morgan never produced another focused study of Indian affairs. He did not entirely surrender interest in the topic as his career progressed, however.

Between publication of “The Administration of Indian Affairs in Utah” in 1948 and the commencement of “Washakie and the Shoshoni” in mid-1953, Dale Morgan was officially unemployed and yet frantically busy. He existed in perpetual financial straits, his attention constantly sidetracked by the necessity of dragging home an income from contractual work, while he stole time—piecemeal or not at all—to work on projects he wished to pursue. The first crush on his time followed hard on his return to Salt Lake City at the conclusion of his Guggenheim fellowship. For three years, between 1949 and 1952, he scratched together a living editing material for the Utah Historical Quarterly (the Powell exploration diaries for volumes 15–17). At the same time, he completed and guided to publication a friend’s lifework out of a sense of obligation to the topic and their friendship, without compensation or acknowledgement. “West from Fort Bridger” (UHQ 19) appeared over the name of the late Roderick Korns but was almost exclusively Morgan’s original research and writing. He managed to pay bills with the small stipend from his editorial work for the Utah State Historical Society, the fee for compiling a historic trails map of Utah for a state department, and by writing self-guided automobile tours for The American Guide.18 He did manage to find time to work on his own interests, but not toward churning out the historical work he wanted. Instead, Morgan immersed himself in assembling the first reasonably complete checklist of works related to the Mormons, preparation for a full his-

torical bibliography of the sect, and then flung himself into the first of three historical bibliographies of Mormon offshoot sects. All along he pushed doggedly but sporadically on his never-completed history of the Mormons which he was writing under contract.

In November 1949, a year after publication of “The Administration of Indian Affairs in Utah” and as he was drafting and correcting his succeeding articles, Morgan gave up hope of finding paying work as a writer in Utah and planned to return to Washington, D. C. Though he did not manage to move for two more years, the district represented a much broader market for his talent as a researcher/writer/editor, and he would at least be near the great libraries of the capitol and National Archives. Still, the move was a leap of faith. As circumstances turned out, during his second residence in Washington (1949–1952), Dale Morgan never managed to find either a local or a steady income. Instead, he eked out a living primarily by cataloguing books and manuscripts for New York book dealers Edward Eberstadt & Sons, sold two sets of transcribed research materials from his own files, and even wrote a grade-school textbook of regional geography. It was a desperate existence, but otherwise, the stay in Washington was prodigiously fruitful for him. He dove back into National Archives material and came away with the majority of the public-records research that went into *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* and a good share of what later became *The West of William H. Ashley*. Fishing desperately in any place that could promise a commission or writing advance, he even floated the idea of producing a history of the Utes to the Bureau of American Ethnology, which the Bureau never pursued. During the same period, he maintained a river of correspondence. He might send and receive as many as a dozen or more letters daily. But a job he never found. Morgan also occasionally pushed along on his Mormon book when finances allowed him the privilege, but after five years without seeing a single draft chapter, Farrar & Rinehart ultimately grew tired of waiting, and in January 1952, released Morgan from the publication contract for his anticipated three-volume historical study of the Mormons.

The loss of this lodestar threw Morgan’s future into uncertainty and forced him to revise his research and publication priorities. To compensate for the loss of the potential income his Mormon book represented, in February 1952, a shaken Dale Morgan proposed a biography of fur trader Jedediah Smith to Bobbs-Merrill, an Indianapolis publisher known for its decent list of popular nonfiction. Through the rest of the year, he worked expectantly and tirelessly on fur trade research, hanging on to solvency by the thinnest thread. All this time Morgan was staking his employment hopes on a single prospective editorial opening in the Bureau of American Ethnology, a vacancy which never

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19 Morgan to Paul Oehser, 1952 Nov. 15, Morgan Papers.
materialized. Finally, in defeat, and still burning oil furiously on his Jedediah Smith biography—without a contract—Morgan retreated to his mother’s Salt Lake City home in the closing months of 1952 to regroup.

Fifteen years of almost ceaseless research in primary sources gave Dale Morgan a grasp of the field so substantive that it began generating its own problems. Recognizing his own biases and limitations to one correspondent, he noted that, “I am under no illusion that anyone is ever absolutely objective about anything. . . . But at least in the writing of history I try to take nothing for granted.”20 Even when he freed time to work on a project, basic research constantly suggested more questions to be answered, more sources to be weighed, and more facts to be checked. His dilemma was common, mirroring the social-history revolution in history at large: as emerging professionalism began informing the study of the American West, it became evident how many unstudied possibilities existed. Opportunities for useful, basic work lay everywhere. Morgan’s attention was constantly distracted by tangential issues that spun into works of smaller scope that he felt could be “knocked out” relatively quickly to resolve some imperfectly understood historical point. However, many of these projects, after he set out on them, proved to be the equivalent of historical icebergs, requiring ever-larger blocks of time and attention as work progressed, which often wrecked larger, more significant projects. His bibliographies of the “lesser” Mormon sects are excellent examples.21 Projects like these provided context or basic research for larger interests and were worthy products in themselves, but Morgan’s passion for factual accuracy based on a comprehensive grip of every possible extant source led him to create finely detailed work that drew him further and further from his key projects. Morgan’s grasp of the sweep of Western trails, the fur trade, and exploration expanded with each project, but since the intersecting historical tangents were endless, the possibilities were distracting.

20 Morgan to S. A. Burgess, 1948 Aug. 13, Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History, ed. John Phillip Walker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 160. His definition of “honest” historical work as the best-detailed can be seen in a comment made to a fellow historian as he lamented, “It is surprising how slipshod much of the literature on the fur trade is these days, and how little honest, which is to say painstaking, research there is.” (Morgan to LeRoy Hafen, 1952 Feb. 19, Morgan Papers).

21 The three were published in Western Humanities Review as “A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ, Organized at Green Oak, Pennsylvania, July, 1862” 4, no. 1 (Winter 1949–50); “A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ (Strangites)” 5, no. 1 (Winter 1950–51); “Introduction to A Bibliography of the Church of the Dispersion” 7, no. 3 (Summer 1953). More than mere checklists, each entry was a careful historical and biographical study of each work, its author, and its significance, often couched in relation to other entries in the bibliography. His quixotic pursuit for absolute bibliographic control of the topic was a major factor delaying Morgan’s work on his Mormon histories; his perpetual delays to accommodate ever-expanding background research was the chief reason Farrar & Rinehart cancelled the book contract.
One of these detours was editing the William A. Empey journal, which documented the ferry at the upper crossing of the Platte River operated by the Mormons in 1848. The long article and extensive notes appeared in *Annals of Wyoming* during the fall of 1949. “I hope that, though the Empey journal project is completed,” wrote editor and state librarian Ellen Crowley, “we shall have further occasion to work together.” Her friendly letter left ajar a door of opportunity that he could not help but fill with yet another cross-path distraction, one that became his most substantive contribution to the understanding of Western Indian-white relations. This was the ten-part documentary series that appeared in *Annals of Wyoming* between 1953 and 1958 as “Washakie and the Shoshoni.”

“Washakie and the Shoshoni” stands entirely independent of his earlier studies and is Dale Morgan’s largest work on any of the West’s native peoples. Like the earlier pieces, though it may have been tangential for him, it was an opportunity to contribute to the field by filling a hole in historical literature. But where the Utah Indian Superintendency and Nevada Indian relations papers had been carefully produced studies, “Washakie and the Shoshoni,” a documentary series, was literally flung together. Had he been burdened by fewer demands it likely would have been very different, undoubtedly fuller, more firmly reinforced, and better informed by other source material. Still, given the extremities under which he worked, it is remarkable that we have it at all.

The series began innocently enough. At his mother’s Salt Lake City house in December 1952, Morgan spent several afternoons sorting and rereading his bulky files of Utah Superintendency transcripts. In the process, he was struck with how much good first-hand data about the Shoshoni could be found in the letters and reports. While the thought had him, Morgan typed a summary query to Lola Homsher, Wyoming’s state archivist and the new editor of *Annals of Wyoming.* He noted that comparatively little had been written about the Eastern Shoshoni, who had been important in the American fur trade and resided in the eastern Great Basin and upper reaches of the Colorado River tributaries. This region was cut through by the central stretch of the Oregon-California Trail. “The documents deal with the economic condition of the Shoshoni,” he wrote, “their relations with other tribes and with white men, both immigrants and settlers, the complex interrelationship of the Shoshoni, the mountain men, and the Mormons, especially with regard to the Green River ferries, problems of control administratively, etc.” In short, Morgan wondered if Homsher and *Annals of Wyoming*...
Richard L. Saunders

Wyoming would be interested in a largish collection of edited documents reinforced by a clutch of suitable notes. Given the nature of the material (sufficient transcripts were already in hand, he felt), he was confident it would be a quick project.

The editor accepted the proposal promptly. The rate of recent submissions had been slow, leaving her half an issue of blank space in the upcoming July number. A solid beginning to Morgan’s proposed documentary collection was potentially large enough to fill the uncommitted pages. A flurry of correspondence through the first half of January 1953 settled on a routine for producing the manuscript, a process which was followed throughout the series: Morgan would select documents from among his transcripts (single-spaced pages, typed almost to the paper margins). His sheets would be sent to the Wyoming State Historical Department to be retyped, double-spaced with necessary margins. These would be returned to Morgan, who would compile the notes on separate pages and mail back the completed manuscript for publication. He plunged headlong into culling his vast collection of documentary typescripts based upon the editor’s estimate that seventy-five pages were available in the upcoming issue, but perpetually busy with other work, he arranged to deliver the manuscript in batches. By the middle of January 1953, Morgan had made a selection that would (he hoped) neatly fill the uncommitted space in Annals. On January 13, he posted the sheaf of thirty-seven numbered document transcripts, together with a half dozen more transcripts dating to 1862 intended as note material.

In his introduction, Morgan announced his intention to generate a documentary record of the Shoshoni that would range from the creation of the territory to the completion of the transcontinental railroad and organization of the Wyoming Superintendency twenty years later. Expecting at the outset that it would be a quick process, no publishing plan was established. How many documents or pages appeared in any issue—indeed, that the documents became a series in the first place—resulted from how much manuscript Morgan had (or had not) submitted, what transcriptions had completed notes, and how much space was available in any particular journal issue. It was to have been a simple, straightforward project to have occupied a summer. It became a rough-and-tumble editorial enterprise that lasted five years.

With the rough transcripts off to Wyoming for retyping, Morgan turned to other projects. Seemingly unable to find gainful employment and with Bobbs-Merrill still frittering undecidedly on his Jedediah Smith sample chapters after a year, he sought diversion and solace by flinging himself into a killing routine of research and writing. Between New Year’s Day 1953 and March he completed the complicated, painstakingly detailed manuscript for the “Churches of the Dispersion” bibliography, his third historically detailed treatment of Latter-day
Saint schismatic publications for the *Western Humanities Review*. By the time the “Dispersion” manuscript was mailed, the Shoshoni documents were back from Wyoming clearly retyped and ready for notes. But just as he set to work on notes for the Shoshoni documents, Bobbs-Merrill wired the long-awaited acceptance of *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*. Morgan was stuck. By working twelve-hour stints each day of the week, he posted his introduction and the completed manuscript for “Washakie and the Shoshoni” on April 22, just under the deadline for the July issue of *Annals of Wyoming*. Meanwhile, he was also generating and delivering the rough manuscript for *Jedediah Smith* to the publisher at the rate of about two chapters a week, without notes.

Despite his feverish activity through the first half of 1953, Morgan was also facing a real risk of financial ruin. He had moved out of his mother’s home so as not to be a financial or emotional burden and was living with his voluminous files in a basement apartment elsewhere in the city. He eked out a bare subsistence on his savings, minor contract work, and the goodness of frequent dinner invitations from extended family in the city. A desperately needed $250 advance against *Jedediah Smith* royalties in July 1953 eased immediate financial worries. It also reminded him that correcting galleys and later, page proofs, would demand priority through the second half of the year. He hardly had time to be pleased when the first installment of “Washakie and the Shoshoni” appeared in mid-month. On its heels, Morgan’s long, broad streak of bad employment luck finally broke.

The same month that his documentary series began in Wyoming’s state history journal and some of the most intense work on the *Jedediah Smith* manuscript was required, Morgan received a letter from George P. Hammond. Hammond was director of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and had been commissioned to retain a qualified private researcher for a pending lawsuit between two Indian tribes. Morgan had met Hammond at least a year earlier while at the Bancroft Library doing research for *Jedediah Smith*. His painstaking thoroughness and attention to historical detail to the West’s history between exploration and settlement got Hammond’s attention. It may have been Morgan’s grasp of Native American research implied by his 1948 *Pacific Historical Review* article, and reinforced by the earliest installment of the Shoshoni documents series, that convinced Hammond to make the offer. 24 With a regular salary finally in hand, even a small one, late in August 1953 Morgan was dispatched to Washington, D.C. to begin intensive research at National Archives. While there,

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24 The research assignment concerned the Navajo tribe’s side of the court case that became *Healing v. Jones*, a land-tenure lawsuit between the Hopi and Navajo tribes filed in 1958. Morgan’s specific duties were to produce research files documenting Navajo tenure in central Arizona.
he delved once again into the Utah Superintendency records, which also conve-
niently served his interests. This effort filled out his personal file of Shoshoni-
related transcripts. Shortly after this trip, much to Morgan’s relief, Hammond
decided to commit the Bancroft Library to producing a descriptive volume of its
manuscript holdings. In late 1953, he offered Morgan a half-time research/edito-
rial position, which was promptly accepted.

While all this was happening, Lola Homsher was making up the prom-
ised second part to “Washakie and the Shoshoni.” The twenty remaining manu-
script pages on hand were a little thin, and she invited Morgan to fill them out
with a few more documents. Already committed past his capacity, he ultimately
demurred. The second part was run from what was on hand while Morgan set-
tled into an apartment in Berkeley, California, during the second week of 1954 to
begin his part-time research/editorial post at the Bancroft Library. He arrived in
California just in time to be driven nearly to distraction by Carl Wheat’s discov-
ery of a historic map of unique importance.

“I want to continue this series until it is complete,” Homsher wrote her con-
tributor encouragingly in February 1954, asking for another fifty pages or so.25
He promised to make an addition to the Shoshoni manuscript, but by April, that
commitment was compromised. The Shoshoni were pushed entirely out of mind
as he devoted available spare time to integrating this map into his earlier research
and writing with Wheat a cooperative volume for the Book Club of California,
Jedediah Smith and His Maps of the American West, later in the year. On-the-job
duties at Bancroft and the demands of being kept on retainer for Navajo research
kept rearranging Morgan’s priorities. He was also expecting new microfilm from
National Archives from the previous autumn’s research, and he required time to
both transcribe and interfile those transcripts with the ones made earlier from
the Wyoming documents.

It was good material. His series was popular with the Annals readership,
and Lola Homsher was willing to include anything he was willing to contribute.
Morgan promised almost weekly to deliver additional manuscript through April
1954, and in the first week of May, finally sent the large installment of transcripts
and notes she had requested, carrying the select documents to the end of the
1850s decade. Fortunately, journal makeup was somewhat fluid and the docu-
mentary series was a flexible contribution that could be divided or expanded
without compromising the sequence. But with the additional pages, Homsher
didn’t have the room necessary to put everything into one issue. She did, how-
ever, have enough manuscript on hand to squeeze out a third and then a fourth
serial part for the January 1955 issue without further submissions. Morgan could
not have provided more anyway. During the rest of 1954, Morgan was chronically

occupied with routine Bancroft work, the irregular but urgent demands of the Navajo research, and still another tangential distraction, an edited version of the James Holt diary in two parts for *Utah Historical Quarterly* (which was also his last published work on a Mormon topic). He pushed off anything else he could, including new *Annals* contributions.

By 1955, however, it was evident that given how much material had appeared in the series’ first four parts, a substantial amount of additional material would be required if the series were to meet the terminal date of 1869 he had set in the introduction. The pending submission deadline was reprieved by a fortunate change in the semiannual issuance of *Annals of Wyoming* which shifted the publication schedule from semiannual January/July to April/October issues. This bought Morgan time, but not forever, and the documentary series was becoming a serious liability for him. Facing the inevitable, he planned to complete the remaining commitment to the Shoshoni manuscript in one large, final installment during ten days in July 1955. Instead, he was suddenly dispatched to Washington to carry out more Navajo research and missed Homsher’s nervously polite letter asking for the promised pages. He returned in late September, behind at work as usual, to find a special delivery plea for the Shoshoni manuscript from *Annals*—the editor was correcting galleys for the issue but had optimistically reserved space for a part to Morgan’s series if he could pull one together. Ever one to honor commitments, Morgan was resolute. “This could scarcely come at a worse time for me, but something is clearly owing you, and I’ll see that it is done if I live till Monday.”26 He promised—and delivered—an installment of a hundred manuscript pages in less than a week, working directly from microfilm to produce letter transcriptions and throwing together notes at a furious pace.

Morgan was able to send a sheaf of selected material in the first week of October 1955, assembled—notes and all—in a spate of effort across five days between September 28 and October 3. Still, the selection he had made did not reach the 1869 terminal date and yet another batch of manuscript pages would clearly be required. “I won’t even pretend to hand you a complete manuscript winding up the whole works down to 1868,” he admitted candidly when sending along “enough to justify Part V.” Morgan concluded his transmittal letter with a promise to complete the series in one more manuscript installment, “And then afterwards you can bid farewell to Washakie, come Part VI.”27

Yet once again, despite intentions, other demands stripped away available time until her query in February 1956 induced Morgan to plead for time to complete notes. He did not confess that his commitment to the documentary series had been completely “out of sight, out of mind” while at work on a contractual

27 Ibid.
book for the Rand-McNally company and having taken over preparation of the massive fifth volume concluding Carl Wheat's monumental *Mapping the Transmissippi West*. Pooling his reserves of energy and attention, a few days of frenetic work generated enough material to justify parts 6 and 7. Yet it merely put off the end since he supplied documents only to 1863.

It required another full year before he could churn out the promised pages. On February 6, 1957, Morgan finally wrote his patient editor that he had at last completed transcriptions for the outstanding Shoshoni documents, and four days later, posted the batch to Laramie. On March 7 of the following week, four years and three months from his initial inquiry, Morgan shipped the final bundle of typed notes to Cheyenne. A few more letters through June resolved queries and minor editorial details, but the submission was finally complete. Rather than one long installment, the remaining manuscript was divided up to allow Homsher to carry “Washakie and the Shoshoni” through three more parts for a total of ten, concluding in the April issue of 1958, a full year after the final manuscript was submitted. Morgan barely noticed the series' conclusion since he was already consumed by work at Bancroft, which had become a full-time appointment, and research for the massive tabulation of 1849 trail-diary data to accompany the James A. Pritchard diary, which would appear in print the following year.\(^{28}\)

After publication of the Shoshoni documents concluded, Morgan never returned to the subject of Indian affairs. Simply put, Indian relations may have been a central part of the overland trail experience, but they were a sideline for him. Even before beginning his Shoshoni series, Morgan admitted to Dean Brimhall that the West's native population always represented a “challenge to my personal interest. Although not so bound up in the Indians as Maurice [Howe] always was, they have fascinated me nonetheless.”\(^{29}\) But fascination as an avocation was different than fascination as vocational subject, which the fur trade and overland trails represented. The research position at the Bancroft Library changed Morgan's career, tying him much closer to California-related interests than to where he had begun in the central Rocky Mountains. By the time “Washakie and the Shoshoni” concluded in 1958, both his professional work and his personal interests lay in other directions.\(^{30}\)

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29 Morgan to Dean Brimhall, 1952 May 7, Morgan Papers.

30 Part of the reason Morgan concluded “Washakie and the Shoshone” with 1869—besides being too recent for his core historical interests—was also because the Wind River Reservation, which was established to corral the Eastern Shoshoni under Washakie, was established by an 1868 treaty. Thus, the Shoshoni presence along the transcontinental trail effectively ceased after 1869. Another clue that suggests he did not consider this series among his “important” work is that, unlike all other multi-part journal
Dale Morgan’s work belongs to an earlier time, one which typically sidelined minority populations if it addressed them at all. He would be uncomfortable that his work might be perceived as culturally biased but would clearly understand the underlying reason why—events happen, but history is crafted. Consumed as he was with knitting together narratives from documentary sources, it might not have occurred to him that the one who crafts a given story also determines what is “true” by shaping what is said—and what is not said, and by asserting that which may be accepted without question, or dismissed, or simply left buried. The entire discipline of American history changed in the social-history upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s. The well-defined, traditional, culturally reassuring versions of American national history, received unquestioningly by generations of students, were being reexamined with different ideas and perspectives and tools: the roles of labor, gender, immigrant and ethnic communities, and by the application of economics, environmental studies, technology, statistics, and folkways, to name a few. Each new perspective suggested that there were different, previously overlooked directions from which to consider the American story—essentially, that the patterns in the fabric of national history should be studied with more than a single interpretive structure. In lecture halls and classrooms the comfortable, coherent, strongly narrative Americanist view, which was well entrenched in history departments through the mid-1960s, was jostled uncomfortably to make room for new approaches. It was a frightening, exhilarating rollercoaster of intellectual enterprise. New turns came almost monthly in some academic journal. “Instead of changing the facts of American history,” recalled one graduate student as his discipline was reshaping around him, “we discovered a history that the old facts could not explain. We did not invent new facts, either; they had always existed. But, through education, we had been trained not to see them, for they contradicted the assumptions that most historians held.”

Certainly, important studies in Native history were produced before 1960, but by and large the major historical works of the topic have been generated after that point. Before then, the study of Indian affairs was almost exclusively a venue of white scholars, and chiefly those from Eastern institutions. Indian

31 Peter N. Carroll, *Keeping Time: Memory, Nostalgia, and the Art of History* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1990), 90. The complexity of the historical shift is explained in a personal way in Carroll’s memoir, a sophisticated comment on the nature of history across this cultural breakpoint; cf. chaps. 6–11. The academic study of the American West was in flux as well but is not a direct analog of national trends in scholarship. Any number of excellent historiographies are available in professional literature.
affairs tended to be written about in terms of evolving government structures, priorities, initiatives, and reactions to native peoples—a rather one-sided, frontier version of traditional Americanist diplomatic history. The approach generated a top-down consideration of federal policymakers and appointed administrators. For years the basis of study was the stories behind treaty negotiations, the various attempts to shoehorn roving peoples onto defined reservations, and the evolution of federal policy toward Indians.

Morgan’s work in Indian affairs belongs to this period of late Americanist history. His study and writings on Indian affairs was shaped chiefly by the cultural perspective of those who generated written first-hand accounts—emigrants and territorial officials. He was uninterested in how trails and emigration affected native cultures, or how Indians may have reacted to them. In this sense, Morgan’s interest and work in Indian relations fits squarely within the historiographic concept of the West during the 1940s and 1950s: the often tense interplay between the federal and territorial governments, the record of economic exploitation (railroads, cattle, mining, lumbering), and the movements of transcontinental travelers, and settlement. Other than the work of a few specialists, the long histories of Spanish and native peoples were generally overlooked. Morgan further limited his interests to the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Thus, his historical approach to Indian affairs mirrored his interest in the place Native Americans occupied—or the obstacles they remained—to national expansion and the management of transportation lines and settlement. As we look back over his body of work, it is evident that while he was not racially or politically prejudiced, Dale Morgan certainly shared the cultural myopia of his culture and time.

As noted earlier, Dale L. Morgan essentially pioneered the substantive study of Indian relations in the Great Basin and central Rockies. He would be scandalized to discover that his work had been collected for reprint without careful, methodical, and complete revision to integrate additional research in new sources. This was the primary reason his own works were never republished during his lifetime (arrangements made for a Jedediah Smith paperback edition without corrections made him furious enough to divorce the publisher). He believed in the evolving integrity of factual accuracy above all else. I will admit that some necessary additions have been made to the notes, but Morgan would be wrong on the point—there is still value in his contributions to the literature as they stand, despite being the work of five decades and more ago.

Morgan’s work was predated by Effie Mona Mack’s chapter, “Federal Relations with the Nevada Indians, 1850–1860,” in Nevada: A History of the State from Its Earliest Times to the Civil War (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), which Morgan failed to compliment. He was much more impressed by the overarching consideration in Alban W. Hoopes’s Indian Affairs and Their
Administration, with Special Reference to the Far West, 1849–1860 (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1932; New York: Kraus Reprint, 1972), which stood as the best study at the date Morgan was writing. George D. Harmon's Sixty Years of Indian Affairs: Political, Economic, and Diplomatic, 1789–1850 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1941), also painted the topic in broad strokes, especially part 3 “The Federal Government as the Guardian of the Indian.” Loring Benson Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren: The Reformation of United States Indian Policy, 1865–1887 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1942) discusses a period of change which was beginning just as the period about which Morgan was interested was closing, but he may not have consulted F. W. Seymour's more popular treatment in Indian Agents of the Old Frontier (New York: Appleton-Century, 1941). Jennings C. Wise, The Red Man in the New World Drama: A Politico-legal Study with a Pageantry of American Indian History (Washington, D.C.: W. F. Roberts, 1931; ed. Vine Deloria, New York: Macmillan, 1971) and Jack D. Forbes, The Indian in America's Past (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964) are other important works. These have been surpassed by more modern work, including a pair of summary works by S. Lyman Tyler, now dated but useful for understanding the state of knowledge and policy during the time which Morgan wrote, Indian Affairs: A Study of the Changes in Policy United States Policy toward Indians (Provo, Utah: Institute of American Indian Studies, Brigham Young Univ., 1964), and later, A History of Indian Policy (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1973). Of course, the capstone to the topic remains the work of Francis Paul Prucha, particularly his two-volume study The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1984), published more than a decade after Morgan's passing.