



The Selected Letters of Juanita Brooks

Edited by Craig S. Smith

"Smith's book offers us a fresh and more intimate encounter with Juanita Brooks than we get even in Levi Peterson's superb biography. He has selected about one-fourth of the extant Brooks letters, focusing tightly on her personality and development as a Utah historian, and they read almost like the diary that she never kept. Even though I was the one who processed the Brooks papers at the Utah State Historical Society, I feel like I know her better now than I ever have."

—Gary Topping, author of *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History*

"This book is a portrait of a brilliant, down-to-earth woman whose accomplishments are clearly established. It can easily take its place among others that tell the story of the history of the west, the people who lived it and those who bring it to life."

—Linda King Newell, coauthor of *Conscience and Community: Sterling M. McMurrin, Obert C. Tanner, and Lowell L. Bennion*

These personal letters provide a nuanced look at the life of the woman who transformed the writing of Utah and Mormon history.

The 220 letters selected for this book offer a fresh and intimate encounter with Juanita Brooks, one of the most influential historians of Utah and the Mormons. Born and raised in the small and remote agricultural village of Bunkerville, Nevada, Brooks lived most of her life in St. George, Utah, and rose to prominence following the 1950 publication of her landmark book *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*. Her unwavering commitment to honest scholarship continues to inspire younger generations laboring to produce excellent objective history.

The letters in this volume, written from 1941 to 1978, trace Brooks's development from fledgling historian to recognized authority. Serving as a biography of her interactions with her contemporaries, this selection of letters provides a new perspective on Brooks's personality and growth as a scholar. Richly detailed, chatty, and covering a wide array of subjects, the letters afford an important glimpse into Brooks's struggles, concerns, and interests.

Craig Smith is a retired archaeologist living in the Salt Lake Valley. His interests include the archaeology and history of the West. In addition to many archaeological publications, he has contributed historical articles to the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, *BYU Studies*, *Overland Journal*, and *Journal of Mormon History*.

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