

## HELEN MAR KIMBALL BIO

**Life:** 22 Aug, 1828 – 13 Nov, 1896

**Age when propositioned:** 14yo

**Smith's age when propositioning:** 37

**Wife of:** Single.

**Fame:** -Her likely pubescent age of 14 when Smith "married" her.

-Smith was 23 years senior to Helen.


-Smith offered "exaltation" to Helen & her family if she married him.

-Given 24 hours to decide!

-Her own father brokered the union.

**Evidence of Consummation:** None

**Married:** Horace Whitney after Smith's murder



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**Episode 74: Story of Helen Mar Kimball**



**1** Emma Smith  
• Joseph's lawful wife  
• Unaware

**2** Joseph Smith Jr.  
• Perpetrator  
• Predator

**3** Heber C. Kimball  
• Helen's Father  
• LDS Apostle

**4** Vilate Kimball

**5** Father Heber  
Helen Kimball

**6** Joe springs the so-called "Abrahamic Test" on Heber.  
Give me your wife!

**7** You've got 24 hours!  
Choose wisely!

**8** Just Married

**9** • Gone on a Mission!  
• Heber writes Helen a letter to "be a good girl"

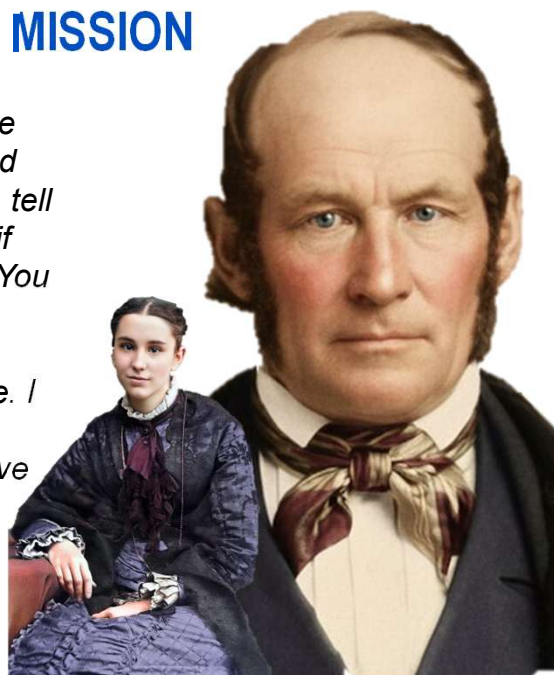
## HELEN RESERVED FOR JOE

"my father had been warned by the Prophet to keep his daughter away...I felt quite sore over it, and thought it a very unkind act in father to allow [William, her brother] to go and enjoy the dance unrestrained with others of my companions, and fettered me down, for no girl loved dancing better than I did...and like a wild bird I longed for the freedom that was denied me; and thought myself an abused child, and that it was pardonable if I did murmur."



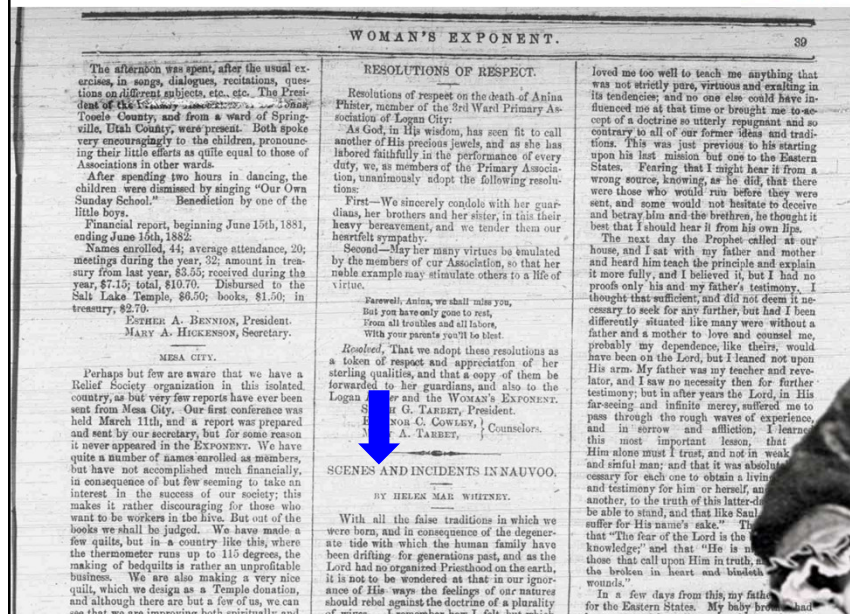
## HEBER WRITES WHILE ON A MISSION

*"MY DEAR DAUGHTER-...be obedient to the counsel you have given to you...If you should be tempted, or having feelings in your heart, tell them to no one but your father and mother; if you do, you will be betrayed and exposed...You are blessed, but you know it not. You have done that which will be for your everlasting good for this world and that which is to come. I will admit there is not much pleasure in this world...Be true to the covenants that you have made...Be a good girl;...your affectionate father."*



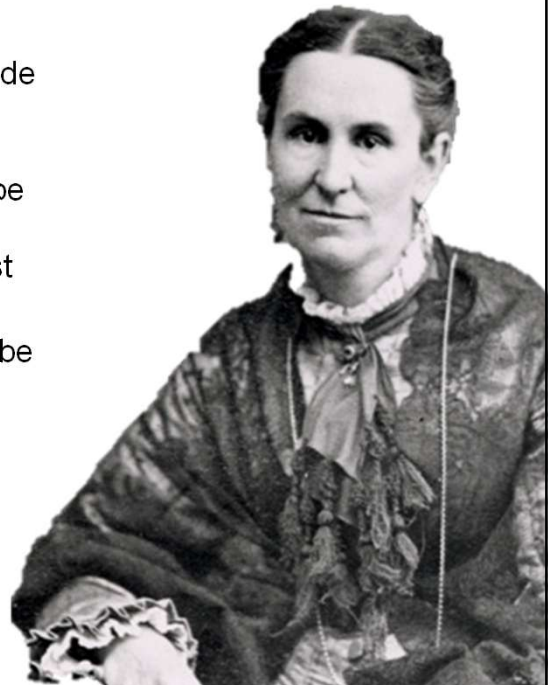


## HELEN'S LATER 1882 ACCOUNT



"With all the false traditions in which we were born, and in consequence of the degenerate tide with which the human family has been drifting for generations past, and as the Lord had no organized priesthood on the earth, it is not to be wondered at that in our ignorance of His ways the feelings of our natures should rebel against the doctrine of a plurality of wives.

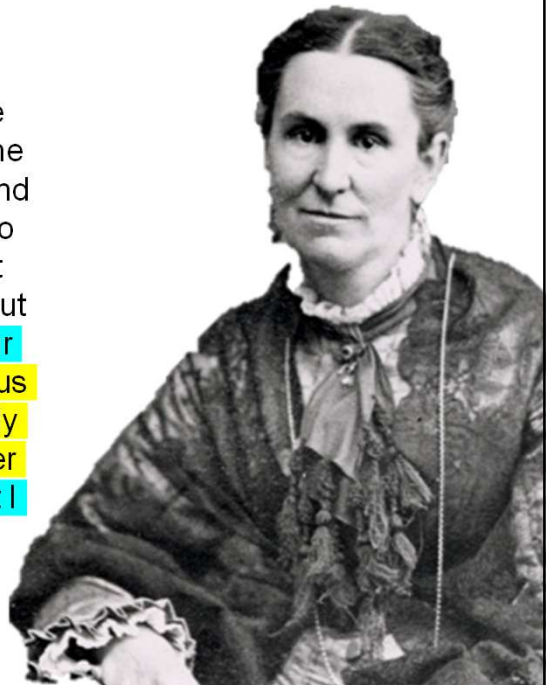
I remember how I felt, but which would be a difficult matter to describe — the various thoughts, fears and temptations that flashed through my mind when the principle was first introduced to me by my father [Heber C. Kimball], who one morning in the summer of 1843, without any preliminaries, asked me



if I would believe him if he told me that it was right for married men to take other wives, can be better imagined than told. But suffice it to say the first impulse was anger, for I thought he had only said it to test my virtue. ... My sensibilities were painfully touched. I felt such a sense of personal injury and displeasure for to mention such a thing to me I thought altogether unworthy of my father, and as quick as he spoke, I replied to him, short and emphatically, "No, I wouldn't!" I had always been taught to believe it a heinous crime, improper and unnatural, and I indignantly resented it.



This was the first time that I ever openly manifested anger towards him, but I was somewhat surprised at his countenance, as he seemed rather pleased than otherwise. Then he commenced talking seriously, and reasoned and explained the principle, and why it was again to be established upon the earth, etc., but did not tell me then that anyone had yet practiced it, but left me to reflect upon it for the next twenty-four hours, during which time I was filled with various and conflicting ideas. I was skeptical — his only daughter, and I knew that he would not cast her off, and this was the only convincing proof that I had of its being right.



I knew that he loved me too well to teach me anything that was not strictly pure, virtuous and exalting in its tendencies; and no one else could have influenced me at that time or brought me to accept of a doctrine so utterly repugnant and so contrary to all of our former ideas and traditions.

This was just previous to his starting upon his last mission but one to the eastern states.

Fearing that I might hear it from a wrong source, knowing, as he did, that there were those who would run before they were sent, and some would not hesitate to deceive and betray him and the brethren, he thought it best that I should hear it from his own lips.



The next day the Prophet called at our house, and I sat with my father and mother and heard him teach the principle and explain it more fully, and I believed it, but I had no proofs, only his and my father's testimony. I thought that sufficient, and did not deem it necessary to seek for any further, but had I been differently situated like many were without a father and a mother to love and counsel me, probably my dependence, like theirs, would have been on the Lord, but I leaned not upon His arm.

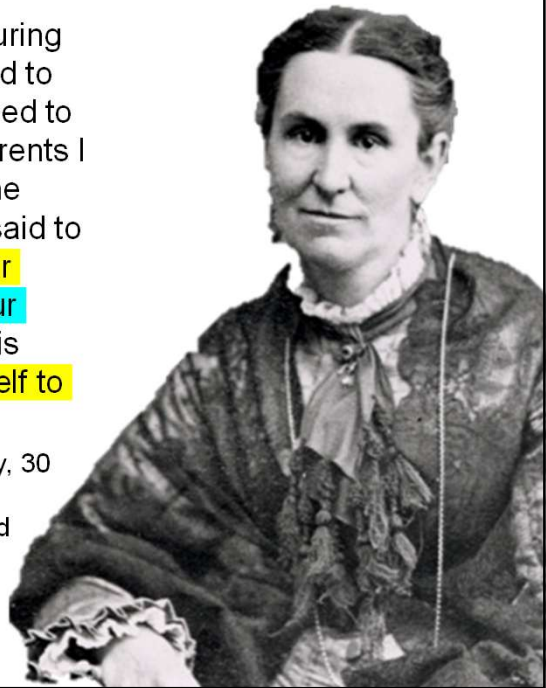
—Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo," *Woman's Exponent* 11, no. 5 (August 1, 1882), p. 39.





"I will pass over the temptations which I had during the twenty four hours after my father introduced to me this principle & asked me if I would be sealed to Joseph, who came next morning & with my parents I heard him [Joseph Smith] teach and explain the principle of celestial marriage. After which he said to me, "If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation and exaltation and that of your father's household and all of your kindred." This promise was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward."

—Helen (Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Autobiography, 30 March 1881," MS 744, CHL. Typescript and copy of holograph reproduced in Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman's View: Helen Mar Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), 482–87.)



## HELEN'S POEM

*I thought through this life my time will be my own  
 The step I now am taking's for eternity alone,  
 No one need be the wiser, through time I shall be free,  
 And as the past hath been the future still will be.  
 To my guileless heart all free from worldly care  
 And full of blissful hopes and youthful visions rare  
 The world seemed bright the thret'ning clouds were kept  
 From sight and all looked fair...*

*...but pitying angels wept.*

*They saw my youthful friends grow shy and cold.  
 And poisonous darts from sland'rous tongues were hurled,  
 Untutor'd heart in thy gen'rous sacrafise,  
 Thou didn't not weigh the cost nor know the bitter price;  
 Thy happy dreams all o'er thou'st doom'd also to be  
 Bar'd out from social scenes by this thy destiny,*



## HELEN'S POEM

And o'er thy **sad'nd mem'ries of sweet departed joys**  
 Thy **sicken'd heart** will brood and imagine future woes,  
 And **like a fetter'd bird with wild and longing heart,**  
 Thou'lt **dayly pine for freedom and murmur at thy lot;**

*But could'st thou see the future & view that glorious crown,  
 Awaiting you in Heaven you would not weep nor mourn.*

**Pure and exalted was thy father's aim, he saw**  
**A glory in obeying this high celestial law,**  
**For to thousands who've died without the light**  
**I will bring eternal joy & make thy crown more bright.**  
**I'd been taught to reveire the Prophet of God**  
**And receive every word as the word of the Lord,**  
*But had this not come through my dear father's mouth,*  
**I should ne'r have received it as God's sacred truth.**

*Helen Mar Kimball*




## A BEAUTIFUL COUPLE!

*Just Married*

**Joe Smith**  
**Age 37**





**"Wife" Helen Kimball Smith**  
**Age 14**






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## Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo

Most of those sealed to Joseph Smith were between 20 and 40 years of age at the time of their sealing to him. The oldest, Fanny Young, was 56 years old. The youngest was Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of Joseph's close friends Heber C. and Vilate Murray Kimball, who was sealed to Joseph several months before her 15th birthday. Marriage at such an age, inappropriate by today's standards, was legal in that era, and some women married in their mid-teens.<sup>26</sup> Helen Mar Kimball spoke of her sealing to Joseph as being "for eternity alone," suggesting that the relationship did not involve sexual relations.<sup>27</sup> After Joseph's death, Helen remarried and became an articulate defender of him and of plural marriage.<sup>28</sup>

After Smith's death, Helen was just 16. She married Horace Whitney "for time".

Helen wrote, *"I had in hours of temptation when seeing the trials of my mother, felt to rebel. I hated polygamy in my heart."*

Helen later contracted a prolonged illness that she interpreted this way:

*"For three months I lay a portion of the time like one dead...I tasted of the punishment which is prepared for those who reject any of the principles of this Gospel."*



Helen would eventually convert to polygamy after recovering from her illness.

"I fasted for one week, and every day I gained until I had won the victory...I learned that plural marriage is a celestial principle, and saw...the necessity of obedience to those who hold the priesthood, and the danger of rebelling against or speaking lightly of the Lord's anointed.

Helen would remain a lifetime member of the LDS Church, dying in Salt Lake City, UT in 1896.

She would have 11 children with Whitney. Orson F. Whitney, a son, would later become an apostle in the LDS Church.

