

Finally, I have chosen just two of the many letters she wrote. The 1869 letter to Horace shows her life at that time, before the diaries, when Horace was away on a mission. The 1882 letter is to her son Orson, when he was in England on a mission. Helen tells him of the birth of one of his children, as his wife, Zina Smoot (Whitney) is staying with her parents in Provo, Abraham and Emily Hill Smoot. It is a charming letter in which Helen Mar describes Orson's family, his other children, and Zina's recovery from childbirth.

A brief look at Helen Mar's family. She was born to Heber C. Kimball and Vilate Murray on August 22, 1828, in Mendon, Monroe County, New York, ten miles west of Palmyra. She had a number of brothers, and Brigham Young and his extended family were also close to Heber and Vilate as Helen was growing up.

She married Joseph Smith in May 1843, at age fourteen, as was mentioned above. This was a dynastic marriage linking Heber C. Kimball to Joseph Smith. Though there is no solid evidence either way, I do not believe the marriage was consummated. However, it was nevertheless emotionally difficult for Helen.

Helen Mar's second husband, Horace Kimball Whitney (1823–84), son of Newel K. Whitney and the charismatic Elizabeth Smith (Whitney), was a brilliant young man, given to reading, drama, and music. He married Helen Mar for time on February 3, 1846, in the Nauvoo Temple, just after standing proxy for Joseph Smith in a marriage for eternity. Helen was thus Horace's "proxy wife," and her children with him were viewed as sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity, not to Horace. Later, he worked in the Tithing Office in Salt Lake City.³

Helen and Horace had eleven children.⁴ Their first three children died as infants.

Vilate Murray Whitney (1853–70) died of tuberculosis at age sixteen.

Orson "Ort" Ferguson Whitney (1855–1931) became a writer and orator; he was called to be an apostle in 1906. He married Zina Beal Smoot (1859–1900), daughter of Abraham Smoot and Emily Almira Hill (Smoot), in 1879, and May Minerva Wells (1854–1935), daughter of Daniel H. Wells and Lydia Alley (Wells), as a plural wife, in 1888. See App. D.

Elizabeth "Lillie" Ann Whitney (Paton) (1857–1905), Helen's