

the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which denied Joseph Smith ever practiced or taught plural marriage, added to the need to respond. In particular, Helen Mar challenged Joseph Smith III to read her articles printed in the *Woman's Exponent* entitled "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo" because they "contain nothing but truths and are calculated to destroy error."¹⁰

Additionally, Helen Mar revealed the reluctance of plural wives to respond to critics publicly: "A feeling of delicacy takes possession of the author in attempting to perform a labor of this nature."¹¹ Nevertheless, she wanted "to open the eyes and throw light upon the minds of those who are laboring under false impressions concerning the religion and works of the Latter-day Saints of Utah." So she took up the challenge and offered her story to the world—a world that often ridiculed and degraded Latter-day Saint beliefs in print, as well as from the pulpits and podiums in churches and halls throughout the nation.

The story of plural marriage did not begin in Salt Lake City in the 1880s. For Helen Mar, it began in Nauvoo in the 1840s—a place and time with which she was intimately acquainted. Her personal remembrances of those days constitute an important source that, taken together with other first-hand accounts by participants, provides a more complete view of the introduction of one of the most distinctive features of nineteenth-century Mormonism. Whether unpublished private documents or published public documents, these accounts are important historical records that must be taken seriously by the modern reader or historian.

Plural Marriage

In the articles dealing with the emotionally charged issue of plural marriage, Helen Mar reveals that she was initially unaware of her father's practice of the principle, as it was called, in Nauvoo. Although forty years had elapsed since Heber C. Kimball first told her of plural marriage, she recalls vividly her feelings at the time: "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. . . . [S]uffice it to say the first impulse was anger."¹² Helen Mar adds: "My sensibilities were painfully touched. I felt such a sense of