



10-1-2004

Book Notices

BYU Studies

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>

 Part of the [Mormon Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Studies, BYU (2004) "Book Notices," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 43 : Iss. 4 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol43/iss4/13>

This Notice is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

A Widow's Tale: The 1884-1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, transcribed and edited by Charles M. Hatch and Todd M. Compton (Utah State University Press, 2003)

"I feel very feeble" (47), wrote Helen Mar Kimball Whitney on November 23, 1884, the day after her husband, Horace K. Whitney, passed away. "There has been nothing left undone that love & friendship could administer" (47), she added the following day, nearly two weeks after beginning the journal that she would keep for the next twelve years. The thirteen consecutive diaries, housed at Utah State University and the LDS Church Archives and published by Utah State University, capture an intimate view of Mormon home life in late-nineteenth-century Salt Lake City. A portrait emerges of a woman who tenaciously maintained a firm matriarchal role amid changing religious and social mores in a tenuous transition period that included the 1890 Manifesto and culminated in Utah's statehood.

Whitney's 1884-1896 diaries make public her personal experiences as a widow struggling with difficult health, family, and economic issues, and her writing discloses her religious strength. The editors provide a detailed introduction, explaining Whitney's extensive family network and analyzing the physical, social, and mental concerns plaguing this woman. The back matter includes a helpful bibliography, subject index, and register of names.

This chronicle of Whitney's daily life records conversations, contemplations, dreams, and memories, with numerous references to people and past events. She notes her traveling, speaking, and social engagements, often for the women's Relief Society, all of which imply an intricate web only alluded to in the diaries. She also

privately ruminates over the plight of her physical ailments and family problems. When added to her memoirs and articles in the *Woman's Exponent* and the *Deseret News* and to her pamphlet defenses on plural marriage, *A Widow's Tale* gives further dimension to the life and times of this complex woman and gives us an integral piece of the history of nineteenth-century Utah.

—Jennifer Reeder