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These letters elaborate on how Eliza Avery Clark, daughter of Hyrum Don Carlos Clark, married into the Wilford Woodruff family. Note Wilford was a dear friend to Ezra T. Clark. Avery married Abraham Woodruff, Wilford's son and apostle, as Abraham's second wife. Avery only had one child through Abraham, after Abraham's death from smallpox. Abraham's first wife Helen also died from small pox, both in 1904.

fundamental questions regarding the implications of polygamy's abolition: How does this change affect the revealed doctrines of the church? What happens to the polygamous families already established? Kenneth Godfrey notes this confusion in Women's Voices: "It was not without struggle and sorrow that Latter-day Saint men and women let go of plural marriage and of their hopes for a unique political and economic kingdom." Although many Latter-day Saints reluctantly accepted the loss of polygamy as a requirement necessary for Utah and the church to enter into mainstream American society, many did not, especially some in general church leadership positions. The United States government continually monitored the church's adherence to recently passed anti-polygamy laws and continued to pass additional anti-polygamy legislation. The Enabling Act of July 16, 1894, for example, forever prohibited polygamous marriages, not just cohabitation. Clearly the government felt it could not yet trust the Latter-day Saints to adhere fully to their own Manifesto renouncing polygamy as church doctrine and practice.

This transitional time for the church coincided with Owen's entrance into adulthood. He was eighteen years old and studying at the LDS College in Salt Lake City with noted Professors James E. Talmage and Karl G. Maeser when his father issued the Manifesto. Upon his graduation, Owen worked at Zion's Savings & Trust Co. in Salt Lake City as a collector and as an assistant bookkeeper. 16 In 1893, at age twenty-one, Owen received a call to serve in the Swiss-German mission. In a somewhat unusual beginning, he served without a companion for the first five months and learned the language from a German family where he recited lessons with the children each morning. Owen distributed religious tracts during the day and held meetings in the evening where he preached in broken, stammering German. Once the mission president finally assigned a companion to Owen, a branch of the church was soon organized. Owen labored diligently, even disguising himself as a peasant worker when the German civil officials banished LDS missionaries, so he could continue his work. Owen returned home in 1896 and resumed his work in the bank. He met Helen May Winters that same year.

Helen May Winters Woodruff

Woodruff family tradition holds that when Owen's father, then president of the LDS Church, first saw Helen, he introduced himself to her. He then told her that he would like her to meet his son Owen and that, if they married, they would be happy together and would not be separated, even in death, by more than two weeks. More important than President Woodruff's encouragement to Owen and Helen, however, was