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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.

Introduction 27

Image #1Avery Woodruff's house in Colonia Juarez. On the porch are Mr. and Dr. Farr, to whom Avery rented one of the front rooms. Avery lived in the house for over a year, leaving it in May 1905. [photo Courtesy of the Lambert and Woodruff families]of 1897, holding to a narrow interpretation of the Manifesto prohibiting plural marriage only in lands where the law forbids it, the First Presidency authorized President Anthony Ivins to perform polygamous ceremonies in Mexico, even though, as Hardy argues, “polygamy had been against the law in Mexico ever since they [Mormons] first entered Mexican territory in the late 1840s.” Many polygamous wives and families from the United States sought refuge in the LDS Mexican colonies, protected against prosecution by Mexican laws that indirectly sanctioned male adultery to preserve Mexican marriages.

Avery lived initially with President Ivins and his family, close friends of Owen’s, and taught at the academy until close to her due date. A few months before the baby was born, Avery moved in with Rhoda and Roxie Taylor, sisters and wives of John W. Taylor, another pro-polygamy mentor-apostle to Owen. Owen and Avery made plans to build a home in Mexico, which they discussed in detail in their correspondence. Both Owen and Helen mention the importance of Avery obtaining a “home of her own.” In Owen’s January 1902 letter to Avery, for example, he places this desire in the context of turn-of-the-century gender roles and, accordingly, subtly affirms his authoritative status in her regard: