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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.

16 Post-Manifest Polygamy

There is little evidence that the Bighorn Basin settlements, unlike those in Star Valley, Wyoming, were intended to harbor church members still practicing polygamy.

Owen's most significant contribution as an apostle came as a result of his supervision of the settlement of Wyoming's Bighorn Basin. Working closely with fellow apostles Cowley and Taylor, Owen negotiated water rights and land purchases to establish this important LDS colony, and he directed the settlers in their material as well as their religious needs. A May 27, 1900, journal entry illustrates this secular/spiritual mix in Owen's administrative responsibilities:

I spoke about an hour to the saints and told them some things I wanted them to do in this new colony. Said if there were any dissatisfied they had better go home at once. I told them as an Apostle of Jesus Christ I wanted to call them on a mission to remain and make homes in this land that I would tell Prest. Snow what I had done and if he disapproved would come back and rectify my mistake. We had a good spirit present and I felt that the Lord was with me and the assembly.

Owen's journal suggests that as early as 1899, Elder Cowley encouraged Owen to join him ideologically and practically in supporting post-Manifesto polygamy. The subject of polygamy weaves itself cryptically through Owen's early journal entries in 1900, and in August of that year he writes of presenting his dilemma to the future president of the church, Joseph F. Smith, who would succeed Lorenzo Snow in 1901:

A subject has been troubling me of late so I have made it a matter of prayer and asked the Lord to reveal his will to me through Prest. Joseph F. Smith to whom I will present the matter at the Temple tomorrow. I talked with JFS and he counsiled me to follow the impression I have had. The matter is clear to me now and I mean to do it.

In this frame of mind, Owen traveled that month on church business to the Bighorn Basin, stopping in Star Valley on the way, and there met Eliza Avery Clark, an eighteen-year-old woman spending summer vacation at home with her family while on a break from her university studies in Logan, Utah.