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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.

30 Post-Manifest Polygamy

You won't need my letters so much now as of old as you will get encouragement and strength from other sources and it seems when I read over what I have written it will surely fail to interest you. (Letter 8)

Now you might think from the tenor of my letter that I am dissatisfied with my lot, but believe me dear Owen, when I say such is not the case. I am contented as can be and would not change one thing in all my circumstances. The only thing I would have changed is "my self," my stubborn selfish nature. But this can not be done in a day. I must struggle & wait. I am not a bit like I want to be. (Letter 39)

As evidenced here, Helen tended to be self-critical in terms of her role in her polygamous marriage and worked at not making others responsible for her personal happiness. Owen and Avery demonstrated similar self-critical, self-reliant attitudes as well. At almost every turn, the three sublimated any emotion or criticism that could undermine their relationship.

To complicate the personal struggles felt by Helen and Owen and Avery, outside forces combined to create a growing hostile environment both locally and nationally. LDS apostle Reed Smoot publicly announced his candidacy for United States Senator at a meeting of the Ladies' Republican Club of Provo on May 14, 1902.68 This announcement infuriated an already angry anti-Mormon faction in Utah and also drew unwanted attention from national anti-Mormon political figures. The Salt Lake Tribune, for example, listed the four main anti-Mormon arguments against candidate Smoot, all revolving around his ecclesiastical position. On January 21, 1903, the state legislature voted him in as a United States senator, and five days later a Salt Lake City citizens' group and a ministerial group filed protests directed to the president of the United States stating that senator-elect Smoot should not be seated. After much wrangling in the Senate over his being seated, Senator Smoot was officially seated in March 1903 with questions and protests to be raised later. As he noted in a letter to Owen, dated January 21, 1904:

I am not worrying about the investigation of myself, the only thing that is troubling me is the inclination of many, and the determination of some, to go into a never-ending investigation of the Mormon Church and charge me with being responsible for the sayings of every man, and the actions of every member of the Church.