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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.

pocket money by gathering watercress from Liberty Park Springs and then selling it at the local market.

The familial circle of Owen's childhood was surrounded by an intense anti-polygamy environment. From 1843 to 1852, a limited number of Latter-day Saints practiced plural marriage as an essential tenet of their faith with only isolated persecution, partly because these plural marriages initially were kept secret from even general church membership, but whenever Utah applied for statehood, polygamy became the central problematic issue. Plural marriage had been practiced by selected Latter-day Saints as early as 1843 when in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith had William Clayton record a revelation from God, which offered the conditions and sanctions for polygamy under the "new and everlasting covenant." According to Richard L. Bushman in Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling, it is possible that Joseph entered into plural marriage with Fanny Alger sometime before 1836, with Louisa Bateman in April 1841, and then with an additional thirty women before his death in 1844. Bushman argues that the primary motivation for these plural marriages was not sexual lust but spiritual necessity and summarizes Joseph's plural marriage practice as follows:

He did not court his prospective wives by first trying to win their affections. Often he asked a relative — a father or an uncle — to propose the marriage. Sometimes one of the current wives proposed for him. When he made the proposal himself, a friend like Brigham Young was often present. The language was religious and doctrinal, stressing that a new law had been revealed. She was to seek spiritual confirmation. Once consent was given, a formal ceremony was performed before witnesses, with Joseph dictating the words to the person officiating.

In addition, Bushman stresses Joseph's insistence that anyone entering into polygamy have priesthood sanction first and that men were not to proceed independently. Other Latter-day Saint men who were sanctioned to take additional wives were expected to follow Joseph's example in that process, stressing always the spiritual imperative of the practice. Further, Bushman reports that the accounts of plural wives published in the decades after the Mormon migration West also reflect this spiritual focus as well as the importance of divine confirmation. In Solemn Covenant, B. Carmon Hardy adds that the LDS Church considered polygamy to be "the family order of heaven" and proclaimed that "it would regenerate mankind, nurture a superior civilization, and eliminate sexual wickedness."