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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.



Avery had had little immediate experience with polygamous families, having been raised as the eldest of a very large monogamous family. She was born March 9, 1882, to Hyrum Don Carlos Clark and Ann Eliza Porter. She moved to Star Valley with her family when she was six. They took over a squatter's claim of a hundred and sixty acres, including a two-room log house with a dirt floor. Meeting with some economic success there, her father eventually bought out his neighbors. Avery explains this development in the following way: "As father expanded his meadow land — eventually buying out his neighbors on three sides, the work on the ranch multiplied, he had more live stock to care for, more machinery, more money and more children, more worries, more blessings." The Clarks eventually moved from the log cabin into a twelve-room ranch house, the largest and most imposing in all of Star Valley. Two rooms were also added to the back of the cabin and the dirt roof was replaced with wooden shingles. The family used the cabin as a kitchen, and one of its bedrooms was often occupied by extended family members.

Although polygamy was quite common in Star Valley, Avery's youthful sexual and spiritual attraction to Owen seemed to push her resolve toward polygamy more than her personal experiences in observing "the principle." She writes of her interaction with Owen in her autobiography with an emphasis on the spiritual:

Always I felt sure he was as perfect as mortal man can be. He treated me as if I were a queen, tenderly touching my hand. There was no love making, just beautiful, lofty words of devotion to the principle we were contemplating living and for each other and Helen.

Further, after their first discussion of marriage, Avery wrote to Owen on October 25, 1900, in spiritual terms: I can say that I feel as you do in regards to the matter and think it is all right. I believe too that we have been guided by our Father in Heaven. Do not see how it could possibly be mistaken. A happier hour of my life was never spent than was during the conversation. It filled me with joy and gladness that has not departed from me, and I thank God that I am so highly favored for I feel that I am. (Letter 3)

Both Avery and Owen considered their impending post-Manifesto polygamous marriage to be sanctioned spiritually according to the "new and