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## Post-Manifesto Polygamy

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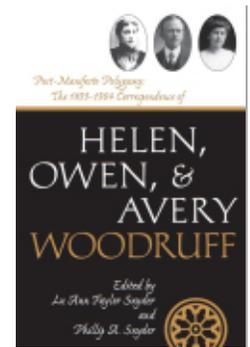
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# 1903

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[Letter 51: Owen to Avery]

[no letterhead, typed]

Chicago, Ill. Jan. 19th. 1903.

Dearest Mattie:

Your very welcome letter of the 7th. inst. reached me at this place yesterday and I assure you I was happy to hear from you again. It is pleasing to me to learn of the kind interest our good friends are taking in the erection of our dear little home. It is so kind of them but just like them for they are full of good deeds and my heart is full of gratitude to them to think that they look after my dear wife in my absence. My programme for the immediate future is rather uncertain until I get word from headquarters at Bethel and learn the wishes of our Chief [code for President Joseph F. Smith] about some things. It is my intention however to start from here to the Big Horn Basin next Friday and then will return to Bethel if there is no danger but if there is you may get a call before you expect it. I should not like to come down without Sister and without going to Bethel to get the things and if it is left to me to decide will come immediately after Conference instead of before. If I did this It would become necessary for Sister to go down alone and take the things so as to be sure and be on time. Please find out the date Prest. I—— expects to be in Boise on his way up and if M—— [Mary] must go alone I shall arrange it so that she can be there on that day and I will then ask the prest. to see her safely through the C—— House.<sup>1</sup> Will write you again just as soon as I know something definite. I shall trust all things pertaining to the house to you and our friends. Do not depend on me one bit I will try to come and enjoy it and leave you to do all the work. Yes have the orchard trimmed if you can find someone who knows how to do it. I only want the sprouts cut away from the roots of the trees and little trimming outside of this done until I am there to see about it. Also the plowing you and the Bishop just manage this matter to suit you and I know it will be right. It has been very cold here and I have been on the go almost day and night. The weather has been beautiful today and for several days past. I want you to be very

carefull of yourself and I am sure if you follow out my many suggestions to you^,^ you will hardly have time to sleep.

Just adopt what you want and discard the ballance. I am very anxious for your welfare and do so hope and pray the Father will send us a perfect little darling, with a choice and beautifull spirit to make us happy in it's little life.

I often go out alone and pray for you girls and ask the Lord to care for you in my absence from home which I know he does.

God bless you dear, may sweet influences ever surround you for you are a brave, good girl.

With much love and prayers  
for you always I am  
Affectionately,  
Your Husband,  
Ivan

[Letter 52: Owen to Avery]

[no letterhead, typed]

Bethel, Me. Jan. 29th. 1903.

Dear Mattie: —

I leave tonight for Chicago and will likely be away for about one month. Enclosed you will find a draft for \$150.

Hope you will keep account of the amounts you pay Pres. I—— for I will depend on your doing this.

Tell Brother [Junius] Romney I would prefer to have him use the “ballustrade” on the porch unless he can got the plain posts ten inches or one foot in diameter.

I think the square posts at the bottom and turned about would be alright if the railing is used but it would not look well without.

Was very pleased to hear from Brother Romney and I am satisfied he will do us a good piece of work.

Mary come down quite often, she has gone to Farmington for a few days. She went Thursday morning to attend the funeral of “Aunt Mary Lizzie” of whose death you may have heard. She died of cancer and it is really a ~~xxxxxa~~ great blessing that she did not linger longer to suffer.

Brother J. [Joseph] M. Tanner's little daughter LeRue is reported to have consumption and the Doctor has taken her to St. George for her health. This seems very sad as she is her mother's only child. When we have health we have much to be thankfull for.

As only a short time is left me to get ready and I have been so busy today I hardly know where I am at I wil have to make this “note” short. It was H—— [Helen] who sent the collar I failed to tell you this before. We are all well and hope you too are enjoying the blessings of the Lord. H—— joins me in love and says she will write you in a few days. Remember me kindly to the girls. God bless you dear and preserve you as sacred that you may have great joy in contemplating the blessings of the Lord to us. With love and blessings,

Affectionately,  
Ivan

[Letter 53: Helen to Owen]

This letter went to Great Falls. [*handwritten in pencil in top margin*]  
[*no letterhead, typed*]

Salt Lake City, Utah. Feb. 4th. 1903.

Dearest Owen:

For the last three or four nights I have tried to write you but something has happened to prevent my doing so. Last evening as I was getting ready to write<sup>1</sup>,<sup>2</sup> Prest Bennion<sup>2</sup> and wife<sup>3</sup> came in. She came to stay with me while he went to meeting, thinking M<sup>4</sup> stayed here and she wanted to get better acquainted with her. Suppose she was very much disappointed at not finding her here. I sent for Sister [Elizabeth Campbell] Taylor to come over and we had a good talk until about ten o'clock when the brethren came from meeting and stayed until twelve and we had a warm discussion on a certain subject. Mary has made an impression all right I think but is as innocent of the fact as can be. Our <sup>5</sup>friend with the “big heart” has made arrangements for M. [Mary Clark] to come down to our house Saturday night to a little sociable of a few of the “select.” I do wish you were at home, you are missing lotsof fun. Monday night Bros. [Frank Y.] Taylor and [George M.] Cannon telephoned me to go out to Edwin’s with them that evening and be sure and bribg Miss “C” [Mary Clark]. We left here at six and went in a bob sleigh. There were thirteen of us and [*illegible stricken out line*] we were afraid something would happen on account of the unlucky number and sure enough a great many things did happen but nothing bad. Sister T.<sup>5</sup> said that <sup>6</sup>happened the next day in their family. She said some mean things that were uncalled for and she felt so badly about it that she sat up all night repenting. I told Bro. T. [Edwin “Teddy” Bennion] yesterday that I had not written to you yet I just hadn’t had time so he wrote for me. He said he told you all about our sleigh ride and who went.

I went to the theater last Friday night and the play was fine. Your mother went with me and we enjoyed it immensely. Yesterday Lutie had Bro and sister Taylor, sister Kelch, Ray and John and Gusta and I up to her home to dinner and we missed you very much. Naomi<sup>6</sup> had her sewing club at her home yesterday all the MacDonald's you know and I went over for awhile.

Owen has just come in with his feet sopping wet and I have had to whip him and with all the noise there is here at present I fancy this will be a jumbled up letter and I beg you to overlook all mistakes and I will try a write a better one next time.

It seems like I miss you more than ever this time and I wish you would write often and I will try to do the same. If we must be separated so much we shall have to resort to writting to make up for it. Now did you ever hear such a clumsy sentence as that last? I was just in the middle of it when Naomi came in and asked me if Emma Rose<sup>7</sup> could come down and stay while she goes to meeting and I forgot just what I had planned to say.

Don't you wish you were here? We have all our own children and Emma Rose [Butterworth] and Ruby [Freeman] besides. You have tried to write under similar circumstance and can sympathise with me. I will not try to write more but will write again when conditions are more favorable.

I love you most ardently, my dear and pray God to bless you every day that all the desires of your heart may be granted unto you and that you may be successful on this trip especially.

I am as ever yours Ioderly,  
Helen.

[Letter 54: Helen to Owen]

[LDS Church letterhead, typed]

Mar. 5th. 1903.

My Own Dear Husband: —

Your letter asking my advise on the business proposition, came about fifteen minutes ago and I take, or rather make, this opportunity of a answering. While I feel rather dubious about giving my ^“^yes,^”^ or “No^,^” to your question I have every confidence in the business firm you mention^,^ and feel that while we may feel weighed nown for awhile with the debt^,^ that we will come out all right in the end.

“Nothing ventured nothing gained” [*underline added later by hand*] says the old addage, I feel that we cam make this venture and if we

should find that we have made a mistake later on, I will bear my share of the blame. Now you know that I am answering on the spur of the moment, not having time to think very much on the question and it is not usually my way of doing, but I feel safe in saying, I know [underline added later by hand] you have been praying that I might give an answer that would meet the approbation of our Heavenly Father. I feel impressed that it will be all right for you to go ahead and borrow the money. I like the idea very [underline added later by hand] much of your getting interested in things of this kind, where you feel that competent men have the business in charge, than to undertake farming or stock raising when you cannot have your eye on the business personally. I feel gratified over the results of the "Logan Knitting Factory,"<sup>8</sup> investment, as there was a check came a few days ago for ~~\$120.~~ \$120.50 One Hundred Twenty Dollars and Fifty cents and I am going up to pay the interest at the bank this afternoon. I went up yesterday and forgot to take the check and told George M.<sup>9</sup> that I had come expressly for the purpose of paying it. He said not to bother about it until you came home but as long as the check is here I will take it up to-day. Susie [Bennion] and I are going down to Provo to-morrow night and I will stay a week. Be sure and tell me in your next letter when you will be home. I am taking a lot of sewing down with me and expect to get it all done. Anna<sup>10</sup> is so home sick to see her folks in Eden [Utah] that she was determined to go up there so I thought it would be better for me to go than to stay at home alone, then I will be saving her wages and coal and food for a week and I hope to get out of debt this month by managing this way. The two boards meet at Sister Dougall's next Wednesday. You will not be here, neither will I.

The cow and calf are doing fine, the latter is a little beauty, I hope we can raise it. I did the feeding for about a week myself, and then Will [McEwan] came over and insisted on doing the chores. I think they want the milk and do not feel like taking it without helping in this way. Will and Alice have bought a building spot in Sugarhouse ward and are going to build soon. It is raining, haling and blowing furiously to-day and how I do hate to go up town, but I must [double underline added later by hand] or this letter will not go until to-morrow night and I want you to get it as soon as possible. You will not wonder at the number of mistakes I make when I tell you that Emma Rose [Woodruff] has been here playing with our three noisy [double underline added later by hand] little tots all the morning and I am trying to write in the midst of it all. You know from your own experience that it is next to impossible to do so.

I have been so extremely busy since you left that the time has passed so rapidly I scarcely know where it has gone to and you will soon be home again before I get half done that I anticipated.

We are all well dear [*underline added later by hand*],<sup>^</sup> and doing the best we can with everything at home. I love you with all my heart and hope you love me as much in return. I am proud of you and always glad that you are my husband and cannot get away from me if you should want to. You have my full confidence and I appreciate the fact that you show by your acts that you have confidence in me. Well darling goodbye, if I keep on writing I will not get up town before the bank closes. Ever praying God to bless you in all your labors,<sup>^</sup> keep you well and bring you safely [*underlining added later by hand*] home ~~is~~ I am as ever,

Yours Hopefully,

Helen Winters Woodruff. [*signature handwritten*]

P.S. We get five or six eggs every day that is when Ford [new nickname for Wilford Owen] and Donald<sup>11</sup> don't get ahead of us and break them. [*added later by hand*]

[Letter 55: Owen to Avery]

[*no letterhead, typed*]

Oaxaca, Mexico

May 2nd. 1903.

My Dear Mattie:

I hope it will be disappointing to you as I assure you it is to me that I shall not be able to come up to the closing exercises of the College. I must leave for the Basin today and will be gone for about two weeks then I will have to go to Idaho for about two weeks more. After returning from my last trip which was quite a hard and long one I hoped to be able to come up but we have been in our Conference ever since until last night.

Was very sorry you did not get my letter for so long a time but I was very glad indeed to finally get a letter in return from you.

I feel most thankful and pleased that you will be able to graduate as we have hoped. You did just right to conclude to take the Summer School work. I have talked with Bros. T and Wilson about the proposed plans for next Winter and Brother Wilson has kindly consented to go up with Bro. T to see you and give you any aid he can by way of suggestion for your Summer School Work. Brother Guy C. Wilson is the principal of our Juárez Stake Academy<sup>12</sup> and I am sure you will like him very much when once you become acquainted with him. He is one of the choicest spirited men in all the Church. I want to arrange to have an out with you and then to have another visit with you in this southern land. Will see you just as soon as possible. Bro. T. [Edwin "Teddy" Bennion] has invited M—— [Mary

Clark] to go to L.[Logan] with him and I think she will do so. Will send something to you by her.

Ever since I received you letter I have prayed for your success and I know the Lord will bless you.

Hoping your graduating exercises may be most happy for you and that God may bless you richly I am with love and blessings,

Ivan

P.S. Enclosed find Check.

[Letter 56: Owen to Avery]

[no letterhead, typed]

Oaxaca, Mexico.

June 29th. 1903.

Dear Mattie÷

We arrived home after one of the most pleasant outings we have ever enjoyed. We voted the outing a thorough success.

On the way over to Mt. P. [Pelier] we caught about fifty fine trout which we brought home. While catching them however we got a glorious soaking but found refuge from the storm under the hospitable roof of Bro. & Sister McGavern at the old Cozzens Ranch. We changed our clothing and enjoyed the ride ver very much as it was so cool and delightfull.

I only spent one night at home and then had to start for another Conferce. The folks who stopping down south are all well though I have not seen v much of them.

I received a letter from Bro. Wilson to the effect that he would start south today. I knew it would rush you too much to be here in time to go today so I saw him and arranged for you to accompany a Sister Teacher who will go in about two or three weeks.<sup>13</sup>

I will arrange for you to get a reduced rate and will either notify Uncle Wilford or have the Agt. instructed to sell you a reduced ticket to this City.

I hope you will enjoy your visit and make the most of it as it will be hort. Have not yet received the check. Be sure and settle with your Father for "Jane".

It is frightfully warm here and I long for a cooler clime especially in the middle of the day when the sun pours down with such intensity. Give my love to the folks and tell them that both of us had a most enjoyable time while we were your guests.

With love and blessings,

Affectionately,

Ivan

[Letter 57: Owen to Avery]

[no letterhead, typed]

Bethel, Sept. 2nd. 1903.

Dear Mattie:-

You are again delinquent in writing to me as this is the second one I have written you since I last heard from you. When you went away I resolved I would write you more often than I had done before and when it is possible for me to do so I do not want to break my resolve. A few days ago I wrote Mary [Clark] inviting her to stay at our home when she comes down to conference and to bring father ofcourse. Have not heard from her and cannot say whether they will come or not but I hope they will.

It is very stormy and cold here just now.

It is the intention of Uncle J.M. [Joseph M. Tanner] and I to make a tour of the country now lying between us and arrive in Germany [code name for Mexico] about Nov. 1st.

A great deal of extra labor has been placed upon me in connection with our new Canal project in Ill. The scheme is to irrigate some 50,000. acres and the Canal will cost \$200,000. this is one of the extra little things which your husband has to look after just now.

I do hope you will not make the acquaintance of some of those disaffected "widows" in that country. People who should naturally be most greatfull for some priviliges oft times are the most ungreatfull and I do not care for you to get too well acquainted with people of this character.<sup>14</sup>

Am thankfull to the Lord that you have something to occupy your mind for I am satisfied you feel happier for your work and the time will pass quickly. Brother C—— [Cowley] who has just returned with Prest. Mc. [McMurrin] says he almost envies me. You made quite an impression on him and he has quite got the spirit of the principle. You may have more company. Let us hope it will be of the best variety. What would you like me to bring you?

I forgot to ask Mary to bring anything down they might wish to send you but she will likely think of it. It makes me happy to know that you dear are contented and happy in your labors. God bless you dear wifie, may you always be favored with His holy spirit to make you happy.

With best love and prayers for your welfare always,

Affectionately,  
Your husband, Ivan

[Letter 58: Helen to Avery]

[no letterhead, typed]

Bethel, Oct. 4th. 1903.

My Dear Sister.

It will soon be two months since you left here and I have not written you yet.<sup>15</sup> I hope you will forgive me for this negligence and I will try to do better in future.

I am so glad to know you have found such warm friends and are so pleasantly surprised with the place. I think you made up your mind that you would be contented when you left home, and that I know, has a great deal to do with your present spirit of peace and happiness. We can make our lives just about what we will and if we are continually looking for something to feel badly about and for some body to treat us unjustly we ~~can~~ can always find plenty to worry about and make ourselves miserable. On the other hand if we look for blessings and look to the future for the realization of our hopes we can be contented wherever we are. I have gone off on a tangent that sounds very much like preaching and you do not need preaching to one bit; you are just doing fine, it is myself that I need to labor with, however I will leave that for some other time and proceed to tell you some <sup>^</sup><sup>^</sup>bits<sup>^</sup><sup>^</sup> of news that may or may not interest you, but trust they will.

We had a very pleasant tripp to Illinois and all the way from here to Pueblo I thought of you<sup>^</sup>;<sup>^</sup> for you had such a short time before gone over the same route. Wasn't the scenery sublime? I enjoyed the whole trip but <sup>^</sup>got<sup>^</sup> homesick for my baby girls the last week and that marred my peace of mind somewhat. The people treated us perfectly lovely and some times I am "a bit" suspicious that it is not on my own account that it is so<sup>^</sup>;<sup>^</sup> but on account of the great love & respect they have for my husband. They simply adore him out there and he merits it too, and it pleases me when I see that the people have this great regard for him, knowing so well how earnestly and prayerfully he has worked for their interests.

We came home and found the "little uns" well and very glad to see their parents again. It must have seemed ages to them but they were so well taken care of that they did not mind it so much after all. One of my neighbors actually had the audacity to say that they were cared for better while I was away than when I am at home. How would that strike you?

Conference started this morning and I have my full quoto of visitors. I have two young ladies ~~fro~~ and one Bro. from the Big Horn and three others making their home with us and Anna and I are going to get supper for about a dozen people. Am not going out myself to conference as I take up too much of the sidewalk and the streets are crowded anyway.<sup>16</sup>

We expect Mary down to stay with us during conference, that is Papa wrote for her to come but knowing your mother's present condition<sup>17</sup> and realizing just how she feels I will not be surprised if she does not come this time and if not we shall try to have her come in April. Bro T. thinks a great deal of M. and if he would only send her to Germany it would be fine for you. M. is a sweet girl I think a great deal of her.

How is your health? Write and tell me all about yourself for I am very anxious to know. I am feeling fine with the exceptions of a great many aches and pains that are perfectly natural to my condition. I am very thankful for the health and strength that we are all blessed with for there is no blessing that I prize more greatly than health, and I have been blessed exceedingly in this respect during my lifetime.

Bro. and Sister Grant returned from Japan last Sunday a week ago to-day; and to say that I was glad to see them is putting it mildly.<sup>18</sup> Sister is not feeling a bit well but think perhaps it is due to the long journey home think she will be better soon. Our good Bro. from your locality has not arrived yet that is, we have not seen him but suppose he will be here later. We are anxious to see him to hear from you as he will tell us all about you.

Now write to me often, just open your heart to me any time and I want to prove to you that I am your sincere friend and will always comfort you and help you when ever I can. I want you to keep all in your heart that I tell you; and we must all stand by each other and be a unit in all things. We must uphold the one at the head and do his bidding. This is hard for me some times for I have such a strong will of my own, but whenever I do as he says I am always in the right and although I can not always see it at the time I see it afterwards.

Now good bye dear and may God bless you,

I am as every yours Sincerely,  
May.

[Letter 59: Helen to Owen]

[no letterhead, hand written]

Salt Lake City, Oct. 27, /1903

My Dearest Owen: —

Your dear letter written at the "Alvarado" came to-day and could you have seen the tears course down my cheeks as I read and re-read its contents you could perhaps understand how truly I appreciated it and value the love of the dear soul who penned it. It came from your true heart I know and found quick response in my own. The thoughts and emotions you have expressed are identical with my own. Our Souls are so closely allied

with each other that it seems impossible for one to have a thought or feeling that the other does not experience. I know that when your dear heart is tried mine aches from sympathy if not from the same cause.

You want me to write you how I feel since you left me. Well, dear, my feelings have been so many and so varied that were I to depict them all you would think me a queer mortal indeed. You know well enough I am moody and the moods have changed with the days. I've had blue days and bright days, and days when my heart has been a stone. With my independent spirit and my will power I builded a wall of reserve about myself until it seemed almost adamant but when your sweet love letter came the wall fell and great was the fall thereof. I was humbled to the earth and was ready to don sack cloth and ashes. To think you could be so forgiving and so generous as to write your recreant naughty girl such a beautiful letter when you had received such undeserved ill treatment from her, made me feel how mean I really am.

Well, dear since the arrival of that letter I have thought and thought of the many sweet experiences of our lives together and have lived again those happy days when first you took me to your heart and then to "our" home. How free from care and sorrow those days. We were children then, boy and girl together. I remember how I used to watch and wa<sup>i</sup>^t for your home coming and when you came would always welcome you with a smile and a "bebe kiiss" (I can't spell German). How we used to sit for hours and never tire of telling each other of our love for each other. And that same love still lives in my heart for you dearest, only increased ten fold by the cares and burdens which come to us and made more pure and holy by the heart aches and sacrafice our Father has required at our hands. I would indeed be faint hearted to turn away from you now when as, you say, you need me most. Almost any one can be true while all is sunshine and gladness but it takes a stout heart and great faith to remain devoted when the storms of life come. I want to be a strong, brave, woman and I mean to be with your help and the blessings of the Lord. I want to love you and stand by you in all the trials and labors of your life. The first is easy to love you. But to give you support when I am tried is ^not^ so easy. I am ashamed that I should cause you one moments pain or sorrow when I realize better than any one else the great load you have to carry and the many responsibilities you you have to bear. I do want to be a true help meet to you that you may always love and trust me. Then I ought to be happy. I ought to know your heart by this time, having lived so near to it, but Satan tries to make me think that because of a change in circumstances our hearts must also change. Only yesterday I said to Mother that my happiness for the first three years of our married life was so complete that were I to have no more in this life I ought to feel satisfied; for truly it was a foretaste of Heaven. Well dear I wrote this far last night and it was

ten o'clock. Anna came in from Ogden just then and June started to cry with the ear ache. The spell was broken or I do not know how long my letter would have been. Was awake nearly all night with June and my own aches, and don't feel extra bright this morning. The children are well but into more mischief. Naomi is doing fine. Dr. Allen<sup>19</sup> called yesterday and said she could stand on her feet now and go for a ride the last of the week and the next time he saw her he wanted her to come to his office. Its the only time he has called. I will write you once more at Juárez and tell you the news this is a love letter. The children talk of Papa every day. Ford says tell him I want two sacks of marbles when he comes and tell him [I love him and I love mama too. *written sideways in upper margin*] I will not write more to-day. I love you with all my heart and ever pray for the rich blessings of Heaven to attend you in all your labors.

I am as ever your affectionate  
Helen.

[Letter 60: Helen to Owen]

[*no letterhead, handwritten*]

Salt Lake City Nov. 1,/03.

My Dearest Owen: —

This is Fast Day and on account of the starving condition in which I find myself I'm fearful that this letter may not prove satisfactory to either of us. Last night Prest. [Frank Y.] Taylor brought a letter over for me to address to you. He asked me to read it before sending it and after doing so am certain it will give you great joy to read it as it is written in such a kindly spirit and exhibits such true brotherly love that I know you will appreciate it thoroughly. I'm afraid you will not be pleased that he read your letter before the Priesthood meeting tho, for I know it was not your purpose to have it known of men, but that it was a desire to do good emanating from your generous heart, like unto none other in the world.

Bro. Taylor told you that we were all at his home to dinner yesterday. Sister T. gave us one of her lovely dinners and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. Bro. Grant and his two wives [Gusta Winters and Emily Wells] and mother [Rachel Ivins Grant] besides your wife, son, and mother [Emma Smith Woodruff] were all the invited guests. It being Wilford Owen's birthday he had a fine time. He says to tell you Grandma gave him a Dollar and he wants you to take him up to the Bank when you come home, so he can deposit it. Sister Taylor and I went up town for a ride last evening and we had a good talk. She was feeling fine. Says its the first day she has felt natural for a long time. But my, she is frail and meek

in her body. She is a good noble woman I only wish I could be as good but that is entirely out of the question.

Aunt Naomi is getting along nicely, it is surprising how well she looks and feels. Yesterday she went out for a ride and was mending stockings when I went in in the morning. Clara [Beebe] is down at your mother's to-day. She's so afraid Van will not get back for her "Tea party." I am trying to think how I could fittingly and appropriately celebrate your birthday and have about decided to have my contemplated Xmas party on your natal Day. Wouldn't that be all right?

I went to the matinee last Wednesday to see "Ben Hur."<sup>20</sup> I think it one of the finest plays or the best one I have ever seen. The public nearly went wild over it. Anna and William went Friday night and although it was the eighth performance they had to pay a Dollar each for standing room in the 2nd circle.

Delia, Lide Brown and Anna Rose came up for the Theater. Poor Delia, I feel so sorry for her. She has so little enjoyment or happiness in this life and to add to her trouble, Mr. Booth scolded Milton for something which Milton that he did not deserve so he has left home and gone to Idaho.<sup>21</sup>

Sister Minnie Robison has a fine son all doing well and especially Joe. Wilma thinks she may add to the list again too. Nabbie Spencer is up to be married next Wednesday and wishes you were here to perform the ceremony.

Gusta is feeling so much better and looks just fine. Oh dear, I wish I were over my trouble. I'm so worried and still there is no cause for alarm more than usual I suppose, only it seems natural for a mother to dread it more every time. Bro. Grant gave me a lovely blessing a few nights ago but it seemed more for you than for me.

Well my dear heart, I wish I could say something to encourage you but do not know <sup>^what^</sup> it shall be more than that I love you with all my heart and soul and want to be a help rather than a hindrance to you, but I fail so many times. But I intend to keep trying and perhaps some day I'll succeed, at least partially, in reaching the standard I am aiming for. Give my love to M [Avery]. Tell her I was pleased to get her letter and will answer soon. Tell her not to send my letters to Helen Winters any more, it caused more excitement at the Prests. Office. Jimmy C. would hardly give it up. And Bro. Winter asked Gusta if she knew of any body by that name and sent the letter to her. I made explanations to Gusta and she wasn't the least bit surprised. Well dear hear I will not write more this time but send you bushels of love and kisses from Mamma and babies.

Affectionately,  
Helen.

## [Letter 61: Helen to Owen]

[no letterhead, handwritten]

S.L.C. Nov. 11, 1903.

My Dear Owen: —

As it is not quite time for the Postman to call thought I would add a few more lines.

Bro. Grant leaves to-day "for sure," so they say; but he has been going every day for a week so I'll not believe what they say until I hear he has gone.

I never saw such people to change their plans. Every day Gusta telephones me about their new program. They have bought and sold two or three homes for Lutie and also for Gusta. They first bought Bp. [Nelson A.] Empey's corner and were going to tear down that house and build a new one for Gusta, and Lutie was going to buy (?) Aunt Emily's home. Next thing Gusta bought and had the deed made out in her name a lovely little house on the corner of 2. and 1st Street just above Sister [Maria Young] Talmage's. Now she has sold that to Lutie and she and Grandma will move in this week and Gusta will remain in the old home until Heber returns and then she will have a house built on Bp. Empey's lot between his place and Sloans. They have had so many more plans that I can not tell them all. Gusta says Heber's scheming machine works like a "buzz saw."

You say send the cow away when I get tired of her, but I feel that we cannot afford to do that as milk has raised in price now. You only get 16 qts. for a Dollar. Our cow gives just a little more than a qt. each ~~d~~milking, but that is better than buying it. The girls have milked until lately I have learned and do the milking myself. I don't mind that part of it at all but it is taking care of the cow I dislike. I put her in the barn at night of course have to clean out the stable every day and ^my^ taste as you know doesn't run in that line. I always thought it a small chore until I have had actual experience and now I have sympathy ~~with~~ ^for^ any body who has it to do. I will continue tho until all my "labors" are over.

Now I do not want you to cut your visit short on my account for I will get along some way as many women have to do I would of course appreciate your being here but fear you will be a little late.

Ford and Helen Mar say to tell Papa they love him and when he comes home the will kiss him all away. When Ford gets angry he say says he doesn't love Annie nor Mama nor any body in the world, but Papa and when you get home he is going to tell you how mean we have all been to him.

Well my dear I shall continue to pray for you and love you I can't help doing the latter even if I try. It is just as natural as breathing.

Give my love to Avery and all the other people that I know. I haven't seen Zina since John left and do not want to for fear I would not lend her much cheer.

The children and Mama send love and kisses to Papa.

Yours Affectionately

Helen.

[Letter 62: Owen to Avery]

[*no letterhead, typed*]

Bethel, Me. Nov. 14th. 1903.

Dear Mattie÷

Yours of the 6th. inst. was received night before last and was very glad to hear from you again and to know that you are well and happy. M—— is still on deck.<sup>22</sup> It beats all I ever heard of and now I do not believe she will be sick until X-mas.

I have been laboring around the country near by so that I could get in soon if it became necessary. Up at Grandpa's old place of residence "our friend" with whom we travelled on our tour through the Stake gave a fine party to the widows of that settlement. He invited Mother [Emma Woodruff] and I up and we enjoyed ourselves very much. I Met Grandma, Uncle J—— and your Father there. He came down partly to see me and learning that I would be up we had a fine visit. We talked over everything from A to Z, and I am most pleased that the "folks" feel that our ~~dexx~~cision was a wise one and feel to help us all they can. I appreciate very much the kindly feeling expressed toward me by Father and hope I will live so that he will never be disappointed in me.

When we decided to build<sup>23</sup> I felt assured that the Lord would open up the way for us to get the means to pay for it and the way is opening up gloriously. Notwithstanding I told him I felt capable of providing for my own Father said he desired to help us at this time and will make arrangements to do so. The payments will be made right along I feel confident and I only wish I could be there to watch the progress of the little home and superintend it myself but at any rate I am sure we will appreciate it when it is done. About the change I want it to suit you but by making this change it will necessitate the building of another chimney and somewhat interfere with our roof plan and besides it would bring the window so near the grate that there would always be danger of lace curtains or other drapings catching fire. My choice would be as we originally planned but you are the one to be suited first and if you are pleased I am sure I shall be. Please tell Brother Romney I would prefer to have large round

pillars for the front porch instead of the [*illegible*]. And in using the round posts or pillars I think I would prefer them without the ballustrade in between them. I fancy this will show the front windows off to much better advantage and be quite an improvement.

This ballustrade which I refer to is sometimes spelled balustrade or called the bannister. Brother Romney will know all about it. Am glad they have finished the foundation and I hope it is a good solid one and I know it must be if it is according to the specifications. How does it look to you? You know you must be a woman of affairs now.

Brother Peart & I have invested in the Union Mercantile Company and I expect we will get most of our furnishings from Dublan. I did this with the hope that it will prove a blessing to us in getting our supplies in that land. They carry about fifty thousand dollars worth of goods down there and it seems to me that from this stock we may be able to find what we need to furnish our humble little home. Just as soon as I get this matter straightened out I will let you know so we can save money and use credit.

Father says Mary will come down to be with you when you are sick [childbirth] and if possible I shall be there also.

Your Father is to be ready to go on a mision to the Southern States on Jan. 6th. but I am about to get the President to change his mission to the Illinois to aid me in our great undertaking there. His practical experience I am sure would be of great help to me and his labors will be a great blessing to that land. Am glad you got an extra \$30. It was like finding it. Every little helps. Am awfully glad you have taken those ugly drawings down and hope you will pattern after the Madona child. Take care of that lariat. Well dear this will reach you about Christmass time. I hope it may prove a happy one for in contemplation of the little new home and other good things. I saw Aunt Phoebe the other day tell Rhoda.<sup>24</sup> She is well. Give my love to the dear girls and wish the President [Anthony Ivins] and family, the Bishop and his, Prof. Wilson and our other dear girls and friends a Merry Christmass for me. Tell Brother Wilson to be "kind to the [*illegible*]. Will send some more money on the next payment about the first of the month. God bless you dear and keep you well and happy.

Keep busily employed all the time in something for the home or something which will benefit you in some other way and you will continue to feel alright.

Wishing you God's blessings on your Christmass day and hoping that you may be happy and well I am,

Affectionately,  
Ivan.

[Letter 63: Avery to Helen]

[no letterhead, handwritten]

Saint George  
Dec. 22, 1903.

Dear Sister Mary÷

Yes, I was surprised to get a letter from you but extremely glad. Your letter reached me 20th and I wanted to get one off to you next mail, but did not have my money in the form of a check so that I could send it and am wondering what you have done. Nothing could suit me better than to help you get Ivan a present and I know he wants a stud. I have heard him say that he would have to get one several times. It is lovely of you to consider me in this, I think we ought to get a good one but can not send any more than \$25.00 now. You pay what you want to for one and I can send more later. Am glad that you wrote as you did about presents as I have been worrying as to what in the world I could send you from here. It is not safe to send things through the mail and I had concluded to not do anything but think some right good things about you on Xmas. At odd times I have made a few little doilies that don't amount to a pinch of snuff, these together with some candy we girls are going to make will make up my presents to my friends.

School is about out for me and I will soon put all my time on making some tiny things for that baby you had such a pretty dream about.<sup>25</sup> That will make me happy wont it? These girls and I, (ask Ivan who they are) had a great discussion this morning on women going out under certain conditions, I declared that I was not going to show this town my wrapper and they said that I must. Maybe I will change, but I have been out so much, that these few days at home seem a real treat.

Can you imagine how glad I will be if Mary can come down to my "party." The dear Sis, I will be glad to see her. I do hope she can go to the L.D.S. after holidays.

I want to say a word about the weather we are having now and if you are cold prehaps it will make you think you would like to spend next winter farther south. Really we have had but one day of storm for two months and it is so warm that we feel comfortable most of the day without a fire and we wear our winter hats and wraps because the delineator says we ought to.

The babies have been crying ever since I began this and I have a shameful looking letter. I am perfectly well and happy and want to work every minute.

Am sorry that you are feeling so miserable and believe a rest is all you need. I hope the next news is "a boy" that sounds good to me.

May the Lord bless you through your sickness and grant the desires you have in your heart is my earnest prayer. Wishing you all a joyous and happy Christmas and New Year. With love  
 Mattie.

[Avery's "Autobiography and Recollections": Excerpt C (pages 47–51)]

[*handwritten*]

After four years at B.Y.C. plus a six weeks in Summer School I accepted a position to teach in Juárez Stake Academy Mexico. I introduced Domestic Art in the school and most of the girls signed up for my course in sewing. Owen had arranged with brother and sister Ivins for me to live in their home and they were the only folks that knew that I was married and going to have a baby other than Guy C. Wilson, Pres. of the Academy. I still was called Miss Clark. Generally I felt quite well but terribly sleepy due to the change in climate and my condition. But I was able to continue with my classes until Feb 22 '04 when became so uncomfortable in my tight fitting clothes.

The Ivins family had treated me royally. Their house was by far the finest most attractive house in the colony with beautiful flowers & shrubs grapes apples and peaches. The vegetable garden provided the greens I so enjoyed. I hesitated to leave this large family with the many diversions and activities that kept life interesting to me. Roxie & Rhoda Taylor<sup>26</sup> had invited me to live with them and do my sewing for the baby on their sewing machine. They would help me. Having a child each they knew my needs. Also by living with them I could watch the construction of my house across the street.

John W. Taylor had given Owen the property on which to build. It had all 100 feet frontage and ran back up the hill side to about 300 feet. The slope had been terraced and planted into an orchard of young fruit trees. The house was to be built in sand stone similar to bro. Taylor's home and by the same masons — the Romneys.

On one of Owen's recent trips to Mexico he and I had planned our home in such a way that additional rooms could be added later on if desired. From the moment the first load of beautiful white stone was delivered to the building site I was filled with apprehension — fear of the financial struggle it would involve and the feeling of permanency that a house in Mexico would bring. This feeling increased as the solid foundation took shape. Then as the walls rose higher and higher under the mason's skill I projected my thoughts to the years ahead when I should

be left in this far away land with my little family — my husband on tours for the church most of the time and the folks in Wyo. I would seldom see. Loneliness enveloped me.

The walls were up to the square ready for the roof. In a few more weeks the house would be ready for occupancy. Bro. Ivins & Bro. Taylor had made frequent inspections and said the job was being well done. Of an evening I sat with bro. Taylor's family in their front porch in full view of my little home. On one such evening Mary Bennion had taken dinner with us & bro. Taylor invited us all to the front porch. The night air was cool & delightful carrying the full tones of our gospel hymns as we sang on and on. Then we went inside and knelt in family prayer as was the custom of most Latter Day Saints. In his prayer bro. Taylor asked the Lord to make it possible that sister Bennion be provided with a home in "this fair land," to add to her contentment." After we arose Mayme said: "Bro. Taylor please don't ever pray for me to have a home in Mexico — I don't want one. All I want is to leave this place as soon as possible as soon as it is safe to return to Utah. No home is going to keep me tied to this forsaken land."

Mayme's speech made me tremble for I saw in that hewn stone that built my home the very quality of permanency. (Moved into new home 2 weeks before Ruth born) In a few days after Owen moved me into our home I told him about Mayme's reaction to bro. Taylor's prayer and that I had told her that no home would keep any of us girls in Mexico when it was safe to leave. Owen's reply to that was forceful and direct — I shall never forget his words, "This is our home as long as we are in the flesh or not another dollar goes on the place." This fell on my ears like a heavy blow, neither of us made further comment. He left on an errand across town. Again I looked at the hewn stone that formed a structure — my home that could last a thousand years!

There were yet no windows finished — sheets pinned up waiting for the glass when Owen rec. a telegram from Pres. Smith to return to April conference. This was disappointing to both of us since he had made the trip to Mexico especially to be with me when the baby came — due any day now. He had been with me less than a week when the call came, had made a trip to Dublan and bought the bare necessities with which to start house keeping — besides a few groceries we had a stove, a bed, also springs on a frame that fold up, a rug for the one front room, two navajo blankets, a table bro. Romney made from oak, round and highly polished extension table and four chairs dishes and utensels.

Left Mexico May 1st 1905 with Mayme Bennion.

Owen left for Salt Lake as requested by Pres. Smith to attend April conference. Mayme Bennion (with her baby Susie) moved in with me that same day and stayed to take care of me during my confinement. Ruth was born April 11, 1904. Mrs. Saville a "midwife" made the delivery with

the help of Mayme, Roxie and Rhoda. Apostel Taylor gave me a blessing while I was in labor after ordering the men who were laying shingles to go home. I think my screams might have frightened them away. The ordeal was terrible — bungled — resulting in later operations.

When Ruth was four days old Owen returned bringing Helen and their four children — Fordie, Helen Mar, June & Rhoda, also Anna Rosenkilde the maid. Mayme went back to the Harris home and Helen took over the nursing job. This may have been distasteful to her taking care of her husband's other wife and child and I wondered why she chose to come at such a time — a total surprise to me. However, I learned later on that she came to get away from the threat of being arrested & brot into court to testify regarding pologamy. And that also was the reason that Owen attended only one meeting of conference after making the long trip home. Pres. Smith told him to stay in retirement after the one session. It was strenuous and difficult times for all of us because of the Federal investigations that were in full swing.

While in Salt Lake Owen attended a meeting of the Presidency and Quorum where a vote was taken and carried to up hold the "Pres.' Official Statement" that was presented to the conference which was to the effect that any violations of the Manifesto regarding plural marriage would be seriously delt with "by the church." Owen voted to uphold the Pres. "contrary to his personal feelings" so says his journal.<sup>27</sup> A few months after this declaration Apostles John W. Taylor and Mathias F. Cowley were excommunicated from the Church. Less than three months after casting his vote Owen died of black small pox — June 20, 1904 following Helen's death June 7.

Because of my weakened condition Owen & Helen with held from me their plans for the future however, it was only a few days after their arrival that Fordie came to the side of my bed saying: "Daddy and Mama are going to the City of Mexico and I am going to stay with you, so is Helen and June and Anna, but not Rhoda cause she's going too." ~~I asked: Am I going?~~ And when Daddy & Mama come back from the City they are going to Germany, all of us are going but you and Ruth. Yes, Anna is going too." I took it all in and said nothing to the others. Then one day after I had been up and taken a few steps Owen came into my room and repeated Fordie's very words to me. He was quite surprised when I told him how I came to know and he waited for my reaction. Of course, I said, I think its grand for you and Helen to go to Mexico City but I don't understand "why Germany"? He explained that Pres. Smith had told him at the late conference that he might send him to Germany very soon to preside over that mission. Owen had previously filled a mission to Germany and spoke the language fluently. He & Helen would likely get the final word on their return from this first trip. Owen and Helen would be above suspicion in

Germany — this was to save them — personally I felt that I would be deserted, tho I did not say so. But Owen said: “In the event that we go to Germany I have in mind three or four alternatives for you Avery — tell me which appeals to you. Either you could go to \*Valley and live with your folks, go to N. York and live in Ben E. Riche’s mission & help sister Rich, live with my mother in Salt Lake, or stay here and improve our little home. What do you think about it? Without hesitating I said: “O, I prefer going to Salt Lake and live with your mother” What about this place”? Its stone it will stand.” Why S. Lake? Because I can have a good time in S. Lake. No more was said on the subject, needless to say I felt resentful.

Owen and Helen had a way of clearing away all shadows and restoring a genial sweet spirit. The days that followed were delightful for the most part. Helen treated me like a real sister — always did.

Then the day arrived “cinco de mia” — the Mexico holiday when I went with Owen to hear his speech at the L.D.S. celebration. At 1 P.M. he & Helen departed for the City and went out of my life forever.