everlasting covenant," which they must have still interpreted as referring exclusively to plural marriage, and they comported themselves during their courtship after the pattern established years earlier by Joseph Smith. Whatever sexual and emotional attraction they may have also felt toward each other, their focus was on the spiritual aspect of their relationship.

The Woodruffs' Post-Manifesto Marriage

That Owen entered into a post-Manifesto polygamous relationship in 1901 is ironic, of course, because it was his own father who had issued the 1890 Manifesto proclaiming the end of plural marriage. This contradiction may be understood best in light of the belief held by some members that the LDS Church had adopted a public stance against plural marriage while maintaining a private stance supporting it. According to D. Michael Quinn in "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904," local church leaders quietly performed undocumented post-Manifesto plural marriages in the 1890s, probably with the church's tacit approval both outside and within its temples.[52] Indeed, Hardy's Appendix II lists 262 post-Manifesto polygamous marriages (October 1890 to December 1910) involving 220 different men, 59 percent of whom served as missionaries, branch presidents, bishops, stake presidents, or apostles, reinforcing the notion that polygamy continued to be practiced mostly within the male hierarchy of the LDS Church.[53]

Family letters and journals do not indicate that any of Owen's siblings entered into post-Manifesto polygamy, but his father's belief and practice in plural marriage, combined with Owen's own childhood experiences in a polygamous household, helped establish his affinity with this way of life. Hardy suggests that Wilford Woodruff's close relationship with Owen demonstrates that his actions were "at least indirectly representative of the sentiments of his late father."[54] Although polygamy proved difficult to practice personally, it was a marital and familial arrangement that grew out of Owen's own experiences. After a confrontation about polygamy during a quorum meeting, Owen recorded the following defense in a journal entry dated January 11, 1900, a year before his own plural marriage:

> I owe my exhistance to the principal of Polygamy and I have some intense feelings regarding the sustaining of that principle. I am indebted to that principle for my life and anytime my Father wants my life to defend that principle (and those who practice it in righteousness) God being my helper it is at