

October 31, 1899, after a very difficult labor. Owen noted later that day:

Fordie — 10 2 lbs — 5:25 pm
 Prest. Richards made a promise about 10 months ago regarding
 my son and therefore we regard him as a child of promise.²⁹

Busy with a new baby, Helen remained at home while her husband continued with his church business travels in Wyoming, Mexico, and Utah. Owen recorded an example of the extensive travel requirements of his apostleship in a December 31, 1900, journal entry:

In the year just closed I have attended 317 Meetings
 Travelled 3555 Miles by team
 Travelled 10570 Miles by R. R.³⁰

The bulk of Helen's letters correspond to the frequent and lengthy periods of time during which Owen was away from home. Initially, Owen's absence and Helen's increasing familial responsibilities troubled her. Two early references in Helen's letters demonstrate her love for, dependence on, and need for Owen:

The way I feel sometimes I am afraid I will not hold out until
 you come but hope I will. . . . (Letter 7)

Only two more weeks. I can scarcely wait that long to see you.
 (Letter 15)

However, as she gained confidence and experience, Helen became a more independent woman.

The Woodruffs moved in an elite social circle. Owen's position as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, albeit the youngest, aligned him with the prestigious and powerful of Salt Lake City. Owen's letters, for example, include his correspondence with Senator Thomas Kearns, Senator-elect Reed Smoot, and various leaders of the LDS Church. Within this influential group, Owen associated most closely with apostles Mathias F. Cowley and John W. Taylor, both strong advocates of polygamy, even after the 1890 Manifesto. Because of his relationship with these two men, which grew closer as the three traveled together to Wyoming's Bighorn Basin, he must have been aware that secret, officially sanctioned plural marriages were still taking place. Eventually, apparently after much