church."[86] Midway through April Conference, President Smith told Owen to "stay in retirement. . . . You would not make a good witness."[87] So, to avoid a subpoena, Owen immediately prepared to leave Utah for Mexico and then possibly to preside over an LDS mission in Germany.[88]

Avery gave birth to her only child, Ruth, in Mexico on April 11, 1904. Although unable to be present for Ruth's difficult delivery because of his assignment at General Conference, Owen visited Avery and Ruth four days later. Owen's arrival surprised Avery, for she did not expect him; nor did she expect Owen to be accompanied by Helen and her four children. Helen dismissed Avery's nurse and proceeded to care for her. Avery later recalled that "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."[89] Avery subsequently learned that President Smith had sent Owen and Helen to Mexico to avoid the threat of arrest and the possibility of testifying in the Smoot polygamy trials.[90] Fear of prosecution may have sent the Woodruffs to Mexico, but they determined to have a good time anyway. In spite of Avery's postpartum condition, Owen and Helen planned to leave three of their children and their maid, Anna, with her while they traveled to Mexico City. In addition, Avery learned that President Smith advised Helen and Owen to travel to Germany later that summer to escape the law. Hurt by these new decisions, which did not include her and Ruth, Avery somewhat resentfully bade farewell to Owen, Helen, and baby Rhoda on May 5, 1904. Little did she know then that this would be the last time she would ever see Owen and Helen.

Death and Burial

Before their trip, Helen and Owen had been advised to vaccinate themselves against smallpox, which infected many in Mexico at the time. According to Avery's autobiography, Owen refused vaccinations, saying that he was on the Lord's errand and God would protect them.[91] This attitude, however unfounded it would turn out to be, proved consistent with Owen's preference for faith and obedience in spiritual as well as material matters. Helen fell ill first, contracting a serious case of black smallpox on May 23. Alonzo Taylor, an LDS missionary in Mexico, helped care for Helen and kept a daily record of her treatment and Owen's bedside devotion. Taylor described Helen's horrific condition in a journal entry dated June 3, 1904:

> I decided at his suggestion to return to the sick room and help wait on Sister Woodruff. The eruption had developed so much that I was about frightened when I saw her. Great white blisters