

quite well when trouble broke out between the two railroads. Mr. Valentine, feeling their lives were in danger, moved in the middle of the night. He took their ox team and cart and headed for Salt Lake. Brooks writes that “In the spring they all went to work with the railroad again until it was completed” (Brooks n.d.:4).

Another family history, of a Miriam Ann Richins Jones, talks about the work that she and her husband did for the railroad (Figure 9.25). In 1868, Miriam and her husband Robert Jones lived in a family member’s home about two miles east of Echo in Weber Canyon. The crops had been ruined the year before by grasshoppers, and so Robert Jones went to work for the “railroad company” near Echo (Richins 1974:5). “He worked by hand for 75 cents per day. Then later he worked with ox team and scraper which would be more pay” (Richins 1974:5). Miriam did her share to help out the struggling family. While her husband was away working for the railroad there were many men, some with families, working for the railroad and stationed at Echo. Miriam saw the opportunity to help support her family and she took in laundry for the men and families at Echo.

Miriam’s life sketch states that; “The clothes to be washed were brought from Echo by young boys and returned by them also. Miriam was paid well for this work which wasn’t easy.” (Richins 1974:5). Around this time Robert and Miriam were making plans to build a home in Henneferville or Henefer. They used the money that they had made from working for the railroad to start their own home.

An interesting story about women visiting a UP Mormon railroad construction camp, but not necessarily providing domestic services, comes from the diary of John Gerber (Gerber 1868). He wrote these entries in his diary while working on the railroad through Echo Canyon in July of 1868:

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This evening brother Young [Wm. Young] arrived with his wife. Wrote letters to my father and family and sent my letters by bro. Wm S. Young’s express. Sister M. Smpy [?] also came to stay a while with Sis. Young at our camp which gives us considerable more to do as we have an extra table to set (Gerber 1868).

The women, associated with one of the main Mormon contractors with the UP, seemed to just make more work for the men who were doing the cooking. Another interesting story concerning railroad camp life is related by Mr. Gerber:

Su 19

Today our company of men has been increased from at an average of 20 men to 40, which keeps us busy at baking bread and cooking for them. One day last week we twisted beans in a kettle where there was previously soap made in a concentrated lye. The men who ate up the beans to have exceeding great pain in their bowels with diareah [sic] but by the next morning were well again (Gerber 1868).