

Cassie Kelley Saves the Day

Late one night, Cassie Kelley tucked her children Winfred, Eddie, Richie, and Laura into bed. Eddie asked her, "Mama, when is Papa coming home? I miss him."

Cassie smiled and replied, "Papa will be home soon. God has lots of important jobs for him to do for the Church."

"And we have important jobs too, right Mama?" asked Richie.

"Yes we do, so no more chatter tonight. We need our sleep so we can do all our jobs. Goodnight." said Cassie.

When Cassie and her husband, Ed, moved to Kirtland they became very busy. Ed, a counselor to the Bishop, was in charge of repairing the Kirtland Temple. By the time the Kelley family arrived in Kirtland, the Temple was nearly fifty years old and needed a lot of repair.

Ed had to travel a lot for his job, so Cassie was often left to take care of the children and help out her neighbors. Cassie also helped make decisions for Temple repair. She enjoyed helping to keep the Temple beautiful.

Morning dawned into another beautiful May day. As Cassie and her children did their morning chores, they saw the tinsmith had arrived to work on the Temple bell tower. Some of the metal had fallen off and there were holes in other places.

That afternoon, Cassie took Laura with her to visit Mrs. Jenkins, who was very sick and enjoyed their company. Laura had baked cookies to cheer Mrs. Jenkins up. Suddenly shouting interrupted their visit.

Cassie went to the door and hear Brother Scott calling that the Temple was on fire!

Cassie told Laura to stay with Mrs. Jenkins and ran home to get Eddie, Richie, and Winfred. She instructed everyone who gathered by the Temple to get as many buckets as they could find: they needed to form a bucket Brigade!

Cassie filled a bucket then passed it to Richie. As Richie passed the bucket of water to Eddie, Cassie filled another bucket. People from all over Kirtland joined the line, passing buckets of water from one person to another until the water made it to the fire in the bell tower. After the water was tossed on the fire, it was sent back down the line where Cassie filled it again.

The Bucket brigade moved so fast that the fire was soon out. At first Cassie and the others were concerned that the fire had done a lot of damage to the Temple. When the smoke cleared, the brigade saw that their quick action had saved the Temple!

The Saints' Herald, the church's newspaper, published an article describing how Cassie helped save the Temple from the fire burning down the Temple.

Cassie and her family lived in Kirtland for a long time. She loved the Temple very much and continued to help preserve the building. Cassie also taught visitors the story of the Temple by leading tours through the building.

Thanks to Cassie Kelley's brave actions and quick thinking, the Kirtland Temple was saved.

Biography of Catherine Kelley

Catherine "Cassie" Kelley was born November 9th, 1853 in Monroe County, Iowa. She was a school teacher until she married Edward Kelley on December 21, 1876. Cassie was baptized into the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Ladder Day Saints soon after her wedding. Cassie and Ed moved to Kirtland, Ohio in 1882 where Cassie led tours and helped her friends in the community. The family lived in Kirtland for almost 10 years before moving to Lamoni, Iowa and then to Independence, Missouri. Cassie Kelley died November 21, 1944.

This story is based on an article from the Saints' Herald:

"By letter from Kirtland to Coldwater, Michigan, we learn that the roof of the Temple at Kirtland caught fire from the tinner's kit, employed in the tinning the belfry; and but employed for the timely discovery, and the energy and assistance of Bro. C. Scott and Sr. E. L. Kelley, the old building would have been burned. Sr. Kelley wrote: "Five minutes later and the whole building would have had to go...NO damage was done to the building to the amount to anything as it was...I drew water and the rest carries."

Additional Sources:

- Cassie B. Kelley Papers, p35, Box 1, f1, Community of Christ Library-Archives
- Walden, Barbara. The Kirtland Letters of Catherine "Cassie" Kelley. The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal. Vol. 24. (2004).
- Saints' Herald. May 26, 1883. No 21 Vol 30.