

## **Building the Kirtland Temple Youth Activity**

Compiled by Joy Ercanbrack for the Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Reunion 2011

The Lord commanded the Saints to build the Kirtland Temple because he needed a place where he and other heavenly messengers could come to restore the essential keys of the priesthood. The Saints also needed a place where they could meet together and learn from their leaders. Building the Kirtland Temple was a great task, but the members worked hard and had faith the Lord would help them do what he had asked them to do.

This pocket holds some objects that will help us to remember stories about how the Kirtland Temple was constructed. Joseph Smith's grandmother, Mary Duty Smith, made her own purse like this by piecing together scraps of material. She wore her pocket around her waist looped through her apron strings. (We think it was about ten inches at the top and about 16-17 inches long.) She removed her pocket and hung it on the bedpost where she slept at night. Grandmother Mary Duty Smith passed away in Kirtland at the age of 93 on May 27, 1836. She is buried in the cemetery near the Kirtland temple.

### **Sprig of wheat**

Grandma Lucy described how the spot for the temple was chosen. She said, "Joseph took the brethren with him, for the purpose of selecting a spot for the building to stand upon. The place which they made choice of was situated in the north-west corner of a field of wheat, which was sown by my sons the fall previous, on the farm upon which we were then living. In a few minutes the fence was removed, and the standing grain was leveled, in order to prepare a place for the building and Hyrum commenced digging a trench for the wall, he having declared that he would strike the first blow upon the house."

On July 23, 1833, twenty-four Church leaders met to lay the cornerstones of the Temple. The First Presidency laid the stone on the southeast corner, and the remaining three cornerstones were laid by other leaders which included Joseph Smith Sr. and all the Smith brothers: Hyrum, Joseph, Samuel, Don Carlos, and William.  
from **Joseph Smith's Kirtland**, Karl Ricks Anderson, p 158

### **Rock**

The Kirtland Temple was built of stone and the outside walls were covered with plaster. Joseph Smith worked in the rock quarry along with the other brethren where the stone for the temple walls was cut. On Saturdays the men who had horses and wagons hauled stone from the quarry to the temple site so the stonemasons would have enough stone to work with during the week. Using hand tools, the stone was cut into the shape of large bricks.

### **White cloth and blue wool**

Although women didn't work at the rock quarry or on the beautiful carpentry, the temple couldn't have been built without their efforts. Many women sewed clothing for the temple workmen. At this time they didn't have sewing machines, so all the work was done by hand with just a needle and thread.

The women of Kirtland sewed yards and yards of white canvas to make curtains for the temple. The curtains were hung from the ceiling of the temple and could be used to divide the large rooms on the first and second floors into smaller rooms. Curtains were also hung above the pulpits to provide privacy when needed. They also made carpets for the temple floor. (I've included a picture which shows the curtains rolled on a pole resting on the cornice of the column.)

### **Broken China plate**

The members of the church collected broken dishes and glass to be put in the plaster so that the temple would be more beautiful. When the temple was finished, the plaster on the outside of the temple sparkled when the sun shone upon it.

### **Cornmeal**

Many people worked on the temple every day. Because the saints were giving all their available money to build the temple, sometimes the workers did not have very much food or nice clothing to wear. Working at the temple site fulltime didn't allow the men much time to take care of their own farms or earn a living. Sometimes cornmeal would be donated and given to the temple workmen. This would be the only food that their families would have to eat.

### **Coins**

Church leaders and members prayed for help to finish the temple. The cost to build the temple was about \$40,000. Some of the Smith brothers went on missions to solicit money to build the temple. Another way the Lord answered their prayers was by sending some wealthy members to Kirtland. These members had enough money to pay the bank for the temple costs.

### **Calendar or watch**

It took almost three years to build the temple. Ground was broken June 5, 1833 and by March 1836 the temple was ready to be dedicated.

One historian wrote, "The Kirtland Temple stands as a monument to Joseph Smith and to those faithful souls [who built it] ... It appears a miracle the temple was constructed and a second miracle it was not harmed in all the years since it was built."

Mrs. Peter S. Hitchcock, *Lake County Historical Society Quarterly*, from **Joseph Smith's Kirtland**, Karl Ricks Anderson, p 156

Although they had to make many sacrifices, building the temple was exciting to our ancestors. They knew the Temple would be a house of God. Isn't it exciting to be at the Kirtland Temple 175 years later? I feel so lucky that we are Smith cousins.