

Mary Elizabeth and Caroline Rollins

by Kellene Ricks

Even though it was a hot July day, Mary Elizabeth Rollins and her sister Caroline lay shivering on top of several large pieces of paper. The thick rows of 150- to 180-centimeters-high corn hid the two girls from the angry men who were hunting for them. The girls held their breath, praying for the men to stop their search and leave the cornfield.

It was 1833, and there was a lot of unrest in Independence, Missouri. More and more converts had settled in the area, and nonmember neighbors wanted the Saints to leave Jackson County, Missouri. Instead, the little community was growing. There was even a printing press in Brother William Phelps's house, and the whole town knew that he was printing revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith and preparing them for publication.

It was some of those same revelations that the girls were lying on. A mob of angry men had become outraged at an editorial written by Brother Phelps that was printed in the Church newspaper. Fifteen-year-old Mary Elizabeth and thirteen-year-old Caroline had watched as the men broke into the Phelps's home and threw the printing press and the printed revelations from the second-story window to the ground below. When Mary Elizabeth saw the papers hit the street, she knew what had to be done. She knew that those revelations and commandments came from the Lord and that it was important that the Saints have copies of them.

Even though they were frightened, both girls ran and gathered up as many of the large papers as they



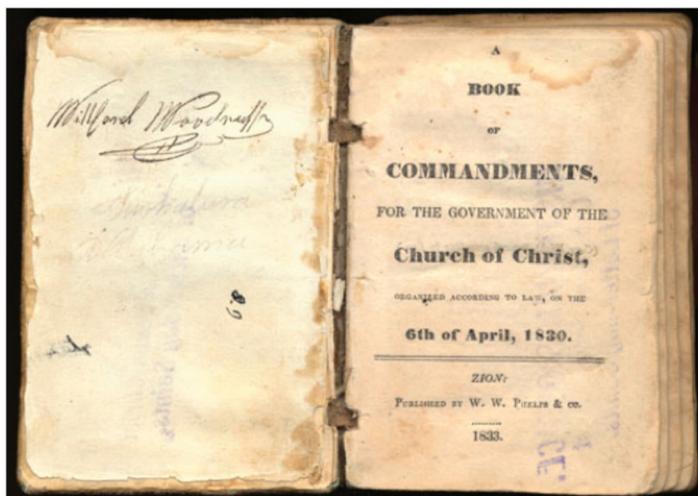
Saving the Book of Commandments.

by Clark Kelley Price

could carry. When members of the mob spotted them from the window and yelled at them to stop, the girls ran to the nearby cornfield, lay down on the sheets of paper, and prayed for protection.

It seemed like hours before the men grew tired of looking for the girls, but finally they left. Mary Elizabeth and Caroline waited longer before gathering up the sacred papers and creeping out of their hiding place.

The revelations were returned to Brother Phelps. Shortly afterward, those salvaged pages were combined with other pages that had been saved, and a tiny book called the Book of Commandments was printed. Two years later those same commandments and revelations were combined with additional revelations from the Lord and printed in a new book. Whenever they read the Doctrine and Covenants, Mary Elizabeth and Caroline remembered the part that they played in the coming forth of this sacred book of scripture.



Wilford Woodruff's Book of Commandments

Autobiography of Mary E. Lightner (1818-1913)



Mary Elizabeth Lightner



I Will Uphold Thee
by Elspeth C. Young

The mob renewed their efforts again by tearing down the printing office, a two story building, and driving Brother Phelps' family out of the lower part of the house and putting their things in the street. They brought out some large sheets of paper, and said, "Here are the Mormon Commandments."

My sister Caroline and myself were in a corner of a fence watching them; when they spoke of the commandments I was determined to have some of them. Sister said if I went to get any of them she would go too, but said "They will kill us."

While their backs were turned, prying out the gable end of the house, we went, and got our arms full, and were turning away, when some of the mob saw us and called on us to stop, but we ran as fast as we could.

Two of them started after us. Seeing a gap in a fence, we entered into a large cornfield, laid the papers on the ground, and hid them with our persons. The corn was from five to six feet high, and very thick; they hunted around considerable, and came very near us but did not find us. After we satisfied ourselves that they had given

up the search for us, we tried to find our way out of the field, the corn was so high we could not see where to go, looking up I saw trees that had been girdled to kill them. Soon we came to an old log stable which looked as though it had not been used for years.

Sister Phelps and children were carrying in brush and piling it up at one side of the barn to lay her beds on. She asked me what I had. I told her. She then took them from us, which made us feel very bad. They got them bound in small books and sent me one, which I prized very highly.