


Clara Barton

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Born	Clarissa Harlowe Barton December 25, 1821 North Oxford, Massachusetts, U.S.
Died	April 12, 1912 (aged 90) Glen Echo, Maryland, U.S.
Resting place	North Cemetery, Oxford Massachusetts
Nationality	American
Occupation	Teacher, Nurse, Humanitarian, Founder and first president of the American Red Cross
Spouse(s)	None
Signature	<i>Clara Barton</i>

Clarissa Harlowe "Clara" Barton (December 25, 1821 – April 12, 1912) was a pioneer American teacher, patent clerk, nurse, and humanitarian. She was the founder of the American Red Cross.

Early life

Clara Barton was the youngest child of Stephen Barton, veteran of the Indian Wars in Ohio and Michigan and a selectman in Oxford, Massachusetts; and his wife, Sarah. Her siblings were Dorothy, Sally, Stephen and David.^[1]

Barton always had a passion for being a nurse. She took care of her dog when he hurt his leg. But the best example was her brother, David Barton. When Clara was 11, David was fixing the barn roof and fell off. The doctor said that he would die in time. But young Clara was determined to save him, and nursed him back to health.

Early professional life

Clara Barton became a school teacher in 1837 teaching in the area for a dozen years in schools at Oxford, N. Oxford, Charlton, and West Millbury. In 1850, Barton decided to further her education by pursuing writing and languages at the Clinton Liberal Institute in New York. Following these studies, Barton opened a free school in New Jersey. The attendance under her leadership grew to 600 but instead of hiring Barton to head the school, the board hired a man instead. Frustrated, in 1854 she moved to Washington D.C. and began work as a clerk in the US Patent Office;^[2] this was the first time a woman had received a substantial clerkship in the federal government and at a salary equal to a

man's salary. Subsequently, under political opposition to women working in government offices, her position was reduced to that of copyist, and in 1857, under the administration of James Buchanan, eliminated entirely.^[3] After the election of Abraham Lincoln, having lived with relatives and friends in Massachusetts for three years, she returned to work at the patent office in the autumn of 1860, now as temporary copyist, in the hope she could pioneer to make way for more women in government service.^[2]

American Civil War

On April 21, 1861, American Civil War, a trainload of Union soldiers was mobbed by Confederate sympathizers in Baltimore, MD and arrived in Washington DC full of dead and wounded with no baggage or supplies. Barton tended to wounded soldiers (some from Massachusetts) quartered in the U.S. Senate chamber in Washington.^{[4][5]} Then after the First Battle of Bull Run, July 21, Barton established the main agency to obtain and distribute supplies to wounded soldiers. She was given a pass by General William Hammond to ride in army ambulances to provide comfort to the soldiers and nurse them back to health and lobbied the U.S. Army bureaucracy, at first without success, to bring her own medical supplies to the battlefields. Finally, on August 3, 1862,^[4] she obtained permission to travel to the front lines, eventually reaching some of the grimmest battlefields of the war and serving during the Siege of Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia. In 1864 she was appointed by Union General Benjamin Butler as the "lady in charge" of the hospitals at the front of the Army of the James. Among her more harrowing experiences was an incident in which a bullet tore through the sleeve of her dress without striking her and killed a man to whom she was tending. She is known as the "Angel of the battlefield."



Clara Barton circa 1866.

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American Red Cross

After the war, she ran the Office of Missing Soldiers, at 437 Seventh Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. in the Gallery Place neighborhood.^[6]

Barton then achieved widespread recognition by delivering lectures around the country about her war experiences. She met Susan B. Anthony and began a long association with the woman's suffrage movement. She also became acquainted with Frederick Douglass and became an activist for black civil rights. In 1869, during her trip to Geneva, Switzerland, Barton was introduced to the Red Cross and Henry Dunant's book *A Memory of Solferino*, which called for the formation of national societies to provide relief voluntarily on a neutral basis.

At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War, in 1870, she assisted the grand duchess of Baden in the preparation of military hospitals, and gave the Red Cross society much aid during the war. At the joint request of the German authorities and the Strasbourg Comité de Secours, she superintended the supplying of work to the poor of Strasbourg in 1871, after the Siege of Paris, and in 1872 had charge of the public distribution of supplies to the destitute people of Paris. At the close of the war she was decorated with the golden cross of Baden and the iron cross of Germany.^[7]

When Clara Barton returned to the United States, she inaugurated a movement to gain recognition for the International Committee of the Red Cross by the United States government.^[5] When she began work on this project in 1873, most Americans thought the U.S. would never again face a calamity like the Civil War, but Barton finally succeeded during the administration of President Chester Arthur, using the argument that the new American Red Cross could respond to crises other than war.

Barton naturally became President of the American branch of the society, which held its first official meeting at her I Street apartment in Washington, DC May 21, 1881. The first local society was founded August 22, 1881 in Dansville, Livingston County, New York, where she maintained a country home.^[8]

The society's role changed with the advent of the Spanish-American War during which it aided refugees and prisoners of the civil war. In 1896, responding to the humanitarian crisis in the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the Hamidian Massacres, Barton sailed to Constantinople and after long negotiations with Abdul Hamid II, opened the first American International Red Cross headquarters in the heart of Turkey. Barton herself traveled along with five other Red Cross expeditions to the Armenian provinces in the spring of 1896, providing relief and humanitarian aid. Barton also worked in hospitals in Cuba in 1898 at the age of seventy-seven.^[9] Barton's last field operation as President of the American Red Cross was the relief effort for the victims of the Galveston hurricane of September 1900. The operation established an orphanage for children of the 6,000 dead, helped to acquire lumber for rebuilding houses, and teamed with the *New York World* newspaper to accept contributions for the relief effort. As criticism arose of her management of the American Red Cross, plus her advancing age, Barton resigned as president in 1904, at the age of 83. After resigning, Barton founded the National First Aid Society. On April 12, 1912 at the age of 90 she died in Glen Echo, Maryland with her friends by her side. The cause of death was tuberculosis, which she had contracted two years earlier and with which she had been bedridden for a month.

Religious beliefs

Although not formally a member of the Universalist Church of America,^[10] in a 1905 letter to the widow of Carl Norman Thrasher, she identified herself with her parents' church as a "Universalist".^[11]

Clara Barton National Historic Site

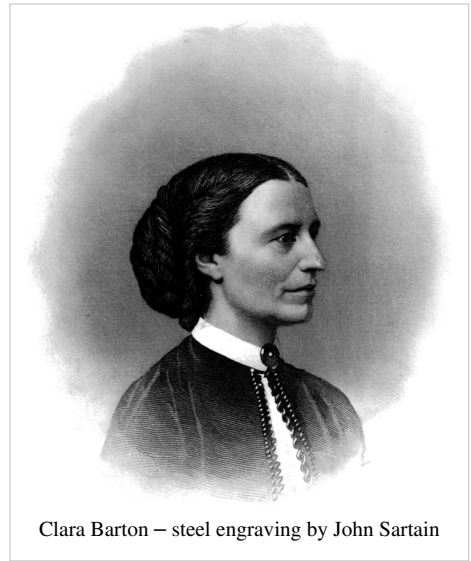
In 1975, Clara Barton National Historic Site, located at 5801 Oxford Road, Glen Echo, Maryland, was established as a unit of the National Park Service at Barton's home, where she spent the last 15 years of her life. One of the first National Historic Sites dedicated to the accomplishments of a woman, it preserves the early history of the American Red Cross, since the home also served as an early headquarters of the organization. She was born in a house which is now a museum.

The National Park Service has restored eleven rooms, including the Red Cross offices, the parlors and Barton's bedroom. Visitors to Clara Barton National Historic Site can gain a sense of how Barton lived and worked. Guides lead tourists through the three levels, emphasizing Barton's use of her unusual home. Modern visitors can come to appreciate the site in the same way visitors did in Clara Barton's lifetime.^[12]



Places named for Clara Barton

- Barton County, Kansas
 - Clara Barton School in Bordentown, New Jersey
 - Clara Barton Drive in Fairfax Station, Virginia
 - Lake Barton in Burke, Virginia
 - Barton Hall, Iowa State University
 - Clara Barton subdivision of Edison, NJ
 - Clara Barton Parkway in Maryland
 - Clara Barton Rest Area in New Jersey
 - Clara Barton District, a regional association of Unitarian Universalist Association member congregations
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in Oxford, Massachusetts
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in Bronx, New York
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in Corona, California
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in Alton, Illinois
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in Anaheim, California
 - Clara Barton Elementary School in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania
 - Clara Barton School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - Clara Barton Open School in Minneapolis, Minnesota
 - Clara Barton School in Fargo, North Dakota
 - Clara Barton Woods in Lake Clear, New York
 - Clara Barton Street in Dansville, NY
 - Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn, New York
 - Clara Barton High School in Elizabeth, New Jersey
 - Clara Barton Community Center, Cabin John, MD
 - Clara Barton First Aid Squad, Edison NJ
 - Barton, a crater on Venus
 - Barton's Crossing, Pittsfield, MA
 - Barton Center for Diabetes Education, North Oxford, MA
 - Barton Hall at Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, New Jersey
 - Barton Boulevard in Rockledge, FL
 - Clara Barton House, a residence hall at Towson University, Towson, MD.
- Clara Barton Elementary in Long Beach Ca on Del Amo Blvd



Clara Barton – steel engraving by John Sartain

Published works

- Barton, Clara H. *The Red Cross-In Peace and War* Washington, D.C.: American Historical Press, (1898)
- Barton, Clara H. *Story of the Red Cross-Glimpses of Field Work* New York: D. Appleton and Company, (1904)

Notes

- [1] Clara Barton Birthplace Museum. "Clara's Family" (<http://www.clarabartonbirthplace.org/life/family.html>). . Retrieved 7 April 2012.
- [2] Clara Barton (<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/clarabarton.html>), Dictionary of Unitarian & Universalist Biography
- [3] Clara Barton (<http://www.civilwaracademy.com/clara-barton.html>), www.civilwaracademy.com
- [4] "Clara Barton Chronology 1861–1869" (<http://www.nps.gov/clba/forkids/chron2.htm>). Clara Barton National Historic Site. . Retrieved 8 September 2011.
- [5] Epler, Percy Harold (1915). *The Life of Clara Barton* (http://books.google.com/books?id=LC5x31cCf_sC). Macmillan. . Retrieved 2010-09-28.
- [6] Clara Barton (<http://dcwriters.poetrymutual.org/Pages/barton.html>). dcwriters.poetrymutual.org
- [7] This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: "Barton, Clara". *Appletons' Cyclopædia of American Biography*. 1900.
- [8] Marks, Mary Jo. "History" (<http://www.redcrossclara.com/History.html>). American Red Cross Clara Barton #1. . Retrieved 2009-01-11.
- [9] Oates, Stephen B. (1994). *A Woman of Valor*. Macmillan. p. 382. ISBN 0-02-923405-0.
- [10] Russell E. Miller -*The larger hope: the first century of the Universalist Church in America* 1386 "Although not formally a Universalist by church membership, she had come of a Universalist family, was sympathetic to the tenets of the denomination, and has always been claimed by it.124 Known as "the Florence Nightingale of our war",
- [11] "Positive Atheism website" (<http://www.positiveatheism.org/mail/eml8886.htm>). . Retrieved 2007-05-25. source taken from *The Universalist Leader* 120/49 1938 My dear friend and sister:

Your belief that I am a Universalist is as correct as your greater belief that you are one yourself, a belief in which all who are privileged to possess it rejoice. In my case, it was a great gift, like St. Paul, I 'was born free', and saved the pain of reaching it through years of struggle and doubt.

My father was a leader in the building of the church in which Hosea Ballow preached his first dedication sermon. Your historic records will show that the old Huguenot town of Oxford, Mass. erected one of, if not the first Universalist Church in America. In this town I was born; in this church I was reared. In all its reconstructions and remodelings I have taken a part, and I look anxiously for a time in the near future when the busy world will let me once more become a living part of its people, praising God for the advance in the liberal faith of the religions of the world today, so largely due to the teachings of this belief.

Give, I pray you, dear sister, my warmest congratulations to the members of your society. My best wishes for the success of your annual meeting, and accept my thanks most sincerely for having written me.

Fraternally yours, (Signed) Clara Barton.

- [12] "Clara Barton NHS – The House" (<http://www.nps.gov/archive/clba/house.htm>). National Park Service. . Retrieved 2007-05-25.

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- *Numbering All the Bones* by Ann Rinaldi features Clara Barton and Andersonville Prison, a Civil War prison with terrible conditions.

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External links

- Harvard University Library Open Collections Program. Women Working, 1870–1930. Clara Barton (1821–1912). (http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/people_barton.html) A full-text searchable online database with complete access to publications written by Clara Barton.
 - Works by Clara Barton ([http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Clara_Barton_\(1821-1912\)](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Clara_Barton_(1821-1912))) at Project Gutenberg
 - Clara Barton National Historic Site (<http://www.nps.gov/clba/>)
 - Clara Barton Birthplace Museum (<http://www.clarabartonbirthplace.org>)
 - The Barton Center For Diabetes Education, Inc. (<http://www.bartoncenter.org>)
 - *Clara Barton's House: Home of the American Red Cross*, a National Park Service Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) lesson plan (<http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/27barton/27barton.htm>)
 - Clara Barton's life in the Finger Lakes, NY (<http://www.ilovethefingerlakes.com/history/famous-people-barton.htm>)
 - Women in History (<http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/bart-cla.htm>)
 - Clara Barton Passport Application – 1869 (http://www.footnote.com/spotlight/3261/clara_barton_passport_application_to) (Original document image)
 - Clara Barton, A Register of Her Papers in the Library of Congress (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms005010>)
 - Clara Barton (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=63>) at *Find a Grave*
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