

Clara Barton

Clara Barton National Historic Site
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Maryland

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Above: Modern portrait of Barton by Mark English; above left: her Red Cross pin; below: amethyst and smoky topaz brooches, presented to Barton by Grand Duchess Louise of Baden (Germany) to recognize Franco-Prussian War relief work and as tokens of friendship.

Clara Barton.



Dr. Julian Hubbell (far left), Barton (second from left), and others on the front porch, May 15, 1904, the day after Barton resigned as American Red Cross president.



More than 2,000 people lost their lives, and thousands were left homeless after the May 31, 1889, flood in Johnstown, Pa. Barton personally directed American Red Cross relief efforts.



Barton, age 80, at her desk in her Glen Echo home. "You have never known me without work," she wrote, "while able, you never will."



Barton on front porch, ca. 1904.

Clara Barton National Historic Site honors the life and work of this outstanding American humanitarian. This house in Glen Echo, Md., was Barton's home for the last 15 years of her life. Built in 1891, it was first used as a warehouse for Red Cross disaster relief supplies. As of 1897 Barton made it her home and the headquarters for the American Red Cross.

Restored to the era of her occupancy, 1897 to 1912, the house and its contents underscore a key personality trait: that Clara Barton made little distinction between her work and her personal life. Sunlight shines through stained-glass red crosses in the windows. Open cabinets in the hall store neat stacks of supplies that appear ready for shipment at a moment's notice. Living quarters were available for Red Cross staff or volunteers returning from disaster sites. Barton worked together with her staff in an open office; she

liked to supervise them at all times. The house was modeled on a relief shelter built by the Red Cross in the wake of the 1889 flood in Johnstown, Pa. Barton's frugal habits are still evident. Ceilings, for example, were constructed of painted-over muslin.

After Barton's death in 1912 the house was privately owned. Rooms and apartments were rented out to help with the expense of upkeep. In 1963 the Friends of Clara Barton, Inc., purchased the house with preservation in mind. Clara Barton National Historic Site was established in 1974, the first National Park Service site dedicated to the accomplishments of a woman. As you tour the house, examine the many details that illustrate Barton's love for her home. "All seems so home-like, spring-like and peaceful," she once wrote, "that I wonder what can draw me away again."

You must never so much as think whether you like it or not, whether it is bearable or not; you must never think of anything except the need, and how to meet it.

—Clara Barton

Clara Barton and the American Red Cross

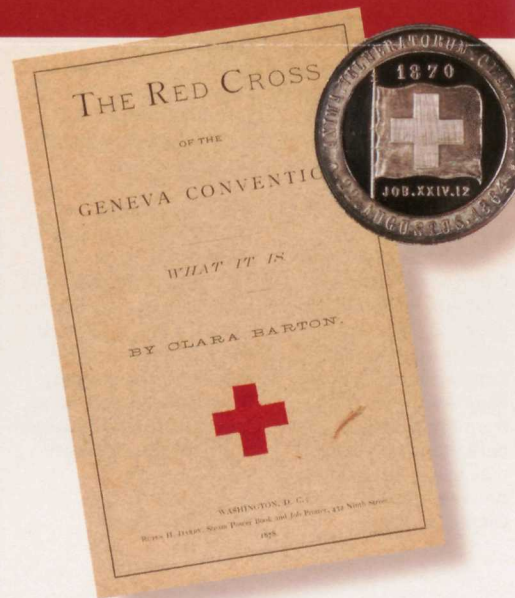
You have never known me without work; while able, you never will. It has always been a part of the best religion I had.

In an era when women rarely ventured outside the sphere of family and home, this shy woman rose from a middle-class background to the ranks of American heroes. Her journey is one of determination, bottomless compassion, and an ability to seize opportunities that came her way.

Clarissa Harlowe Barton was born the youngest of five children on December 25, 1821, in North Oxford, Mass. Stephen and Sarah Barton raised their family to value education and public service above personal gain. Clara, as she was known, started teaching school at age 17. In 1854 she moved to Washington, D.C., and worked as a clerk in the U.S. Patent Office; she was one of only a few women employed by the Federal Government. Situated in the nation's capital at

the outbreak of the Civil War, she was ready for the work that would earn her worldwide fame. "This conflict is one thing I've been waiting for," she told a friend. "I'm well and strong and young—young enough to go to the front. If I can't be a soldier, I'll help soldiers." At first she solicited donations of supplies for Union soldiers, which she stored in her home. Beginning in 1862 she went onto the battlefields, risking her life to nurse the wounded and dying, and writing letters to soldiers' families. Barton worked alongside other relief groups, such as the U.S. Sanitary Commission and U.S. Christian Commission, but she preferred to work alone, unhampered by organizations and interference.

After the Civil War, Clara Barton continued her charitable activities, using her growing fame to lend prestige to her causes. She opened an office to seek information on missing soldiers. She helped identify thousands of gravesites in the former prison camp at Andersonville, Ga., and was instrumental in establishing its national cemetery. She also spoke publicly in support of



Pamphlet by Clara Barton promoting the U.S. ratification of the 1864 Geneva Conventions. Upper right: Official medal of the International Red Cross.

rights for African Americans and women. In her writings and lectures Barton projected confidence and authority. Yet the private Clara Barton was often fearful and fragile. By 1869 she needed a rest. She traveled to Europe and there learned of a worldwide war relief movement. Jean-Henri Dunant, a Swiss banker, had witnessed an 1859 battle in Italy. More than 30,000 dead and wounded were left on the battlefield. Horrified, Dunant publicized the need for battlefield relief in his book *Un Souvenir de Solferino*. His work inspired the 1864 Treaty of Geneva, which set international conventions for treatment of the wounded and established the International Red Cross to aid those suffering as a result of war.

Barton worked with war-stricken civilians during the Franco-Prussian War. When she returned to the United States she was determined to promote the idea of the Red Cross at home. It was a difficult job. She endured bouts of poor health, uncooperative government officials, and public apathy. She persevered, and in 1882 the U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Geneva. That year

the American Red Cross was officially chartered. Clara Barton ran the American Red Cross with the highly personal style she had exhibited during the Civil War. As president from 1881 to 1904 she directed relief, garnered supplies, and expanded the organization. Barton's greatest innovation was to engage the Red Cross in peacetime and natural disaster aid, with more than 18 relief efforts to her credit. Largely because of her influence, the International Red Cross officially recognized peacetime work through its 1884 "American Amendment" to the Geneva Treaty.

During the Spanish-American War of 1898 76-year-old Barton directed relief efforts from Cuba. Though the Red Cross aid was timely and competent, the war exposed the limitations of its inner workings as well as its inability to meet the needs of the modern nation. Alarmed, several Red Cross members began to press for Barton's resignation. They considered Barton too old, disorganized, and unbusinesslike to deal with the expanding Red Cross. She resigned in 1904.



American Red Cross field quarters during relief efforts for Sea Island, Ga., hurricane, 1894.

Barton returned to her voluminous correspondence and her interest in the feminist movement. In 1905 she established the National First Aid Association of America to educate communities about emergency preparedness. At home in Glen Echo she read, wrote, gardened, and enjoyed the antics of her cats and horse. Here she remained until her death in 1912.

Clara Barton's Life and Work



Left: Clara Barton ca. 1850; ca. 1865 (by Mathew Brady); and in 1878 wearing pin pictured at top. Right: Barton working with orphans in Cuba. Far right: Barton and staff working at Civil War veterans' encampment on National Mall, 1887.

1821
Born December 25 in North Oxford, Mass.

1825-50
Starts school at age 3 and starts teaching at 17.

1850
Attends Clinton Liberal Institute in New York;

spends a year furthering her education.

1852
Establishes free public school in Bordentown, N.J.

1854-60
Patent Office clerk, Washington, D.C.

1861-65
Aids Civil War wounded at battles of Manassas (second), Antietam, Fredericksburg, The Wilderness, Spotsylvania.

1864
Treaty of Geneva establishes International Red Cross.

1865-68
Searches for U.S. Army soldiers declared missing. Helps establish national cemetery at Andersonville, Ga.

1870-71
Works with the International Red Cross in Europe.

1873
Suffers nervous breakdown; recovers in Dansville, N.Y.

1877-82
Promotes U.S. ratification of Treaty of Geneva.

1881
Establishes and heads the American Association of the Red Cross. Elected its first president, serves 23 years, and personally directs relief efforts for more than 18 natural disasters and for the Spanish-American War.

1882
U.S. ratifies Treaty of Geneva. American Red Cross is chartered by President Chester A. Arthur, joining the International Red Cross.

1889
Flood relief work, Johnstown, Pa.

1891
Initial construction of the house in Glen Echo, Md. First used as a warehouse.

1897
Moves to Glen Echo warehouse and remodels it into home and headquarters.

1898
Works in Cuba during Spanish-American War.

1900
Hurricane relief work in Galveston, Texas.

1902
Attends International Red Cross conference in Russia.

1904
Resigns as president of American Red Cross. Establishes National First Aid Association of America in 1905.

1912
Dies at Glen Echo, Md., April 12.



ARMENIA 1896



Throughout her life Barton treasured the honorary medals, pins, and brooches awarded to her. Most of her collection is housed today in the Library of Congress. From left: Topaz-and-gold brooch and iron cross medal, presented for work in Franco-Prussian War; silver, enamel, and diamond medal for 1896 work in Armenia; gold knot brooch presented by Grand Duchess of Baden, 1897.

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Warehouse, Headquarters, and Home

In 1889 twin brothers Edwin and Edward Baltzley, local entrepreneurs, bought a tract of land in Maryland along the Potomac River and named it Glen Echo. To promote home sales, they established the Glen Echo Chautauqua, the newest of more than 50 Chautauqua assemblies around the country whose aim was to bring education, culture, and personal enrichment “to the masses of the people.” The Baltzley brothers asked Clara Barton to head up the Women’s Executive Committee of the Chautauqua. The position included the offer of a house nearby. Seeing the offer as an opportunity to benefit the Red Cross, Barton accepted.

Barton chose the design of the house, modeling it on the shelters that the American Red Cross used during flood relief efforts at Johnstown. In 1891 she moved into the Glen Echo structure, but found the new community too remote; indirect transportation routes made for a long and difficult commute into Washington, D.C. Moreover, there was no telephone service or reliable mail delivery. At the end of the Chautauqua season she moved back to the city. For the next six years the house was a Red Cross warehouse where disaster-relief supplies were received, opened for inspection, stored, and shipped out as needed. By 1897 the electric trolley line extended from Washington, D.C., to Glen Echo. Barton moved into the warehouse and remodeled it for use as the American Red Cross national headquarters. It was also her home. She directed the organization from here, relying on a constantly changing staff. An assistant’s diary entry in 1898, reads: “Office work today consists of indexing books, filing letters, writing several letters for Miss Barton, and in the afternoon writing Dr. Hubbell’s report of Sea Island relief, the latter to be used in Miss Barton’s book.”



The Glen Echo headquarters also served as living quarters for an assortment of volunteers and staff members. Barton encouraged her staff to live here; staff members lived either in fully furnished bedrooms or in storage rooms containing folding beds or cots. Closets throughout the house stored supplies. Today you can see the closets built into the main hallway, designed to resemble paneled walls. From her bedroom in the back, Barton had a fine view of the Potomac River. After the Glen Echo Chautauqua failed, the property adjacent to the house developed into the Glen Echo Amusement Park.



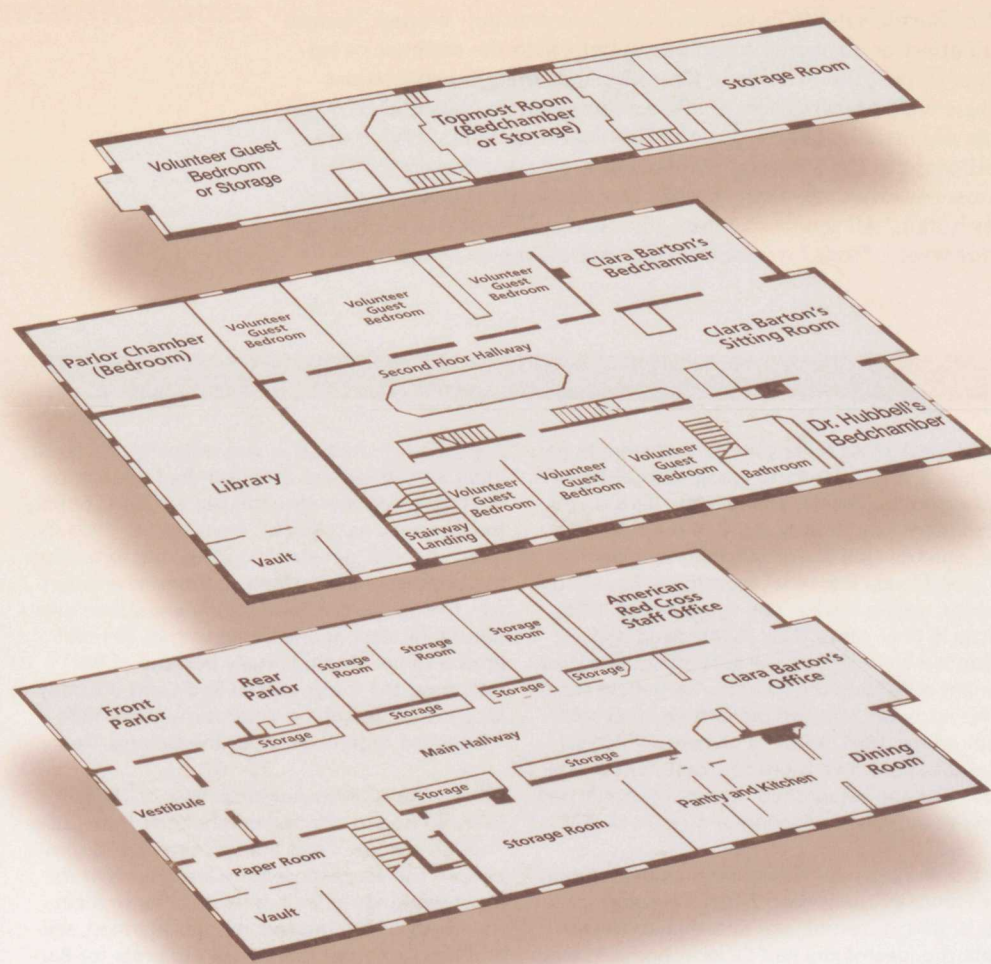
Far left: Red Cross relief shelter in Johnstown, Pa., 1889. Left: Postcard view of Clara Barton home, ca. 1907, after addition of scenic rail ride at neighboring Glen Echo Amusement Park. Right: Clara Barton National Historic Site today. The house is restored to the era of her occupancy.



The House Today

The National Park Service has worked to restore this “beautiful building commemorative of Clara Barton” and will continue to preserve Clara Barton National Historic Site “sacred to her memory.” The restoration is based on extensive research through original writings, diaries, oral interviews, and photographs.

Here you can gain a sense of how Barton and her staff lived and worked, and you can come to appreciate the site in the same way visitors did in Clara Barton’s lifetime. As you tour the house, try to imagine what it was like when Barton lived here. The hallway was adorned with gifts from grateful foreign governments, and rooms overflowed with framed proclamations of gratitude, photographs of her relief work, and portraits. The numerous hidden closets held Red Cross supplies. The bustle of volunteers and visitors gave the house an earnest and productive atmosphere.



Planning Your Visit

Clara Barton National Historic Site was established by Congress in 1974 and presented to the National Park Service in 1975. It is administered by George Washington Memorial Parkway. The park includes Barton’s former home and the original one-acre tract, plus about eight acres of additional land.

Getting to the Park
The park is located off MacArthur Boulevard in Glen Echo, Md., adjacent to Glen Echo Park. By car it is easily accessible from the Capital Beltway (I-495): *Inner Loop*—take Clara Barton Parkway (exit 41); *Outer Loop*—take Glen Echo/Cabin John Parkway (exit 40). Follow the brown park directional signs located on the parkway and MacArthur Blvd. Additional directions are posted on the park website. Visitors may use the parking lot between the house and Glen Echo Park.

Tours and Programs
The park is open seven days a week; it is closed on Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. The house is shown by guided tour only. Tours start on the hour between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Reservations are required for groups of 10 or more. Parks as Classrooms school programs are available by reservation. The park hosts several special events throughout the year. Contact the park staff or visit the website for more information or to schedule a group reservation.

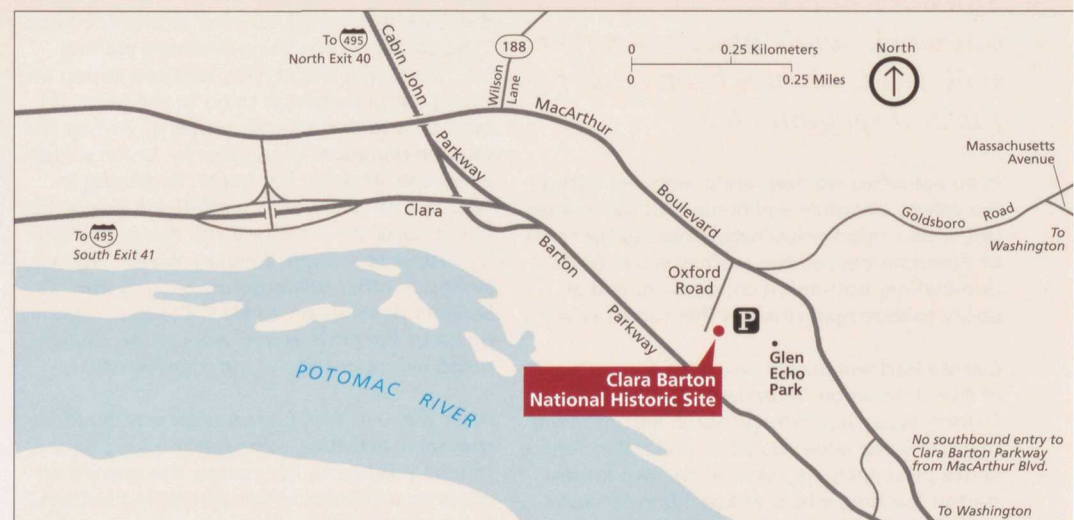
More Information
Clara Barton National Historic Site is one of more than 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn

more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America’s communities, visit www.nps.gov.

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Far left: Tulips and irises are cheery spring bloomers on the grounds. Clara Barton flew both the American flag and the Red Cross flag at her home. Right: The front parlor; as was the custom of the day, guests were received here.



Dr. Julian Hubbell

In 1876, while living in Dansville, N.Y., Clara Barton met a man who would become one of the most influential people in her life. Julian Hubbell was a young chemistry teacher at Dansville Seminary. They became friends, and when she told him of the Treaty of Geneva and how she hoped for its adoption in the United States, Hubbell asked what he could do to help. “Get a degree in medicine,” she replied. Hubbell left his teaching position and entered the University of Michigan’s Homeopathic Medical College in 1878. After interrupting his education three times to personally conduct American Red Cross field relief, he earned his medical degree in 1883.

When the American Red Cross was established, he became its chief field agent. As such he participated in more field work during relief operations than she did. His skillful organization and quiet control were directly responsible for much of the success of the early ARC. His loyalty never wavered. Like Barton, the Red Cross was



his life as well as his profession. He supervised construction on the Glen Echo house and lived there when not engaged in field work. When Barton was forced to resign from the Red Cross, he resigned also. Barton deeded the house to Hubbell. Upon her death he and others formed the Clara Barton Memorial Association to honor her memory and work. The association had little



public support and eventually disbanded. Hubbell was struggling with the care of the house when he was swindled out of the property. He fought to regain title and won his lawsuit in 1927.

Hubbell’s Successors
After his death in 1929 his nieces inherited the property—and the responsibility of honoring Barton. The Hubbell sisters rented out apartments in the house and used the income to supplement care of the property. In 1942 Rena Hubbell sold the house to her friend, Josephine Franks Noyes. Noyes, and her sisters after her death, continued to rent rooms and cared for the home until it was purchased by the Friends of Clara Barton, Inc., in 1963. That group was instrumental in getting the property designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965, pushed for the establishment of the Clara Barton National Historic Site, and deeded the house and many original furnishings to the National Park Service in 1975.

Upper left: Dr. Julian Hubbell, 1890. Left: Hubbell (third from left), Barton (third from right) and other dinner guests at Glen Echo, 1902.



Above: Barton (right center) and other Red Cross workers in Tampa, Fla., 1898, en route to Cuba to aid in the Spanish-American War. Right: Barton ca. 1881 in Dansville, N.Y. While living in Dansville she organized the ARC, established its first local chapter, and was elected its first president. It was in Dansville that she and Hubbell met.



Above: Memorial service for Barton at Glen Echo. In accordance with her wishes, she was buried near her family members in Oxford, Mass. Barton died at her Glen Echo home on April 12, 1912, at age 90.