Name: **Clara Barton**  
*Clarissa Harlow Barton*

**Occupations:** Teacher, Patent Office Clerk, Nurse & Relief Worker in the Civil War, Founder of the American Red Cross and National First Aid Association of America

**Born:** December 25, 1821 in North Oxford, MA  
**Died:** April 12, 1912 at Glen Echo, MD

**Most Famous For:**
- Nursing and Relief Work during the Civil War  
- Founding the American Red Cross

**Loyalties:**
- She was fiercely patriotic and pro-Union  
- Clara worked tirelessly on behalf of the wounded and the needy  
- She supported African Americans, and in her later years was a moderate feminist

**Description:**
“She was small, slender and striking: only 5 feet tall, with silky brown hair parted in the middle and combed into a bun in the back of her head; she had a round face, a wide, expressive mouth, and exquisite, dark brown eyes. It was hard to tell her age; she looked to be in her late 20s but was actually 39” (Oates 3). She used rouge and eyeliner, and dyed her hair. She was anxious not to look like a “camp follower”, so she attempted to have a male escort whenever possible.

**Interesting Pre-War Information:**
- Clara remembered “nothing but fear” during her childhood. Her mother (Sarah) had a violent temper; she also let Clara’s four older brothers and sisters (who were at least ten years older) raise her most of the time. Clara’s sister, Dolly, became mentally ill and violent and was kept in a locked room in the house, which was common in the 1800s. She told a friend that she survived by learning to “walk cautiously” and “always stand alone” (Oates 25). Trying to fit in, family heredity and fear of her mother caused her to have a lifelong battle with depression and feelings of inadequacy. Yet she overcame these issues to lead a remarkable life.

- She was an excellent horsewoman and a dead shot with a revolver (Oates 7). As a child she could run and ride better than the boys and loved to be with them (Pryor 13-14).

- Clara’s father (Stephen Barton) fought under Gen. “Mad” Anthony Wayne in the Northwest Territory. (See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_Territory) for an explanation of its location and settlement.) He told stories about soldier life, patriotism and courage (Pryor 5). Before he died in 1862 he encouraged Clara to help Union soldiers in the field, saying, “I know soldiers, and they will respect you and your errand” (Oates 41).

- Clara loved to learn and was so far ahead in her studies that she received one-on-one attention from her teachers. She loved their approval – something she didn’t get from her family. She also learned that hard work and “hard thinking” would earn her respect (Pryor 12-13).

- From age 11 to age 13 she nursed her brother David back to health. He had been seriously injured in a fall.
Clara began to teach at the suggestion of L.N. Fowler, a phrenologist. (Phrenologists believed that intelligence and personality were revealed by the shape of a person’s skull.) Her parents hoped that teaching would cure Clara’s shyness. Fowler saw that she needed to have purposeful work and to be appreciated (Pryor 19).

She started a free school in Bordentown, NJ. There were no students on the first morning – but she had 55 students within two weeks. Eventually there were too many children for the little school. In autumn 1853 the town completed a new school for all 600 children. It was considered “inappropriate” for a woman to lead the school – so a man was chosen instead of Clara – at twice her salary. Clara and her close friend, Fanny Childs, resigned (Pryor 45-53).

She was so hurt that her health broke down – a pattern that happened many times during her life (Pryor 53).

In July 1854, Clara took a job as a “temporary clerk” in the United States Patent Office. She earned $1,400 per year (good pay) – the same salary as a man. Her job was eliminated by the Buchanan administration in 1857. She was allowed to come back to the Patent Office after Lincoln’s election – but this time as a copyist at a much lower salary (Pryor 57-64).

### Interesting Wartime Information:

- On Apr. 19, 1861, Union troops were attacked by a pro-secession mob in Baltimore. Clara knew many of the New Englanders personally. She visited their temporary barracks and found that they had lost their supplies in Baltimore. The next day she delivered badly needed food and supplies to the cheering soldiers. This was her first wartime relief effort.

- Clara nurtured the friendships of Massachusetts Senators Charles Sumner and Henry Wilson, as well as Col. Daniel Rucker, Gen. Benjamin Butler, and others – these friendships helped her reach many of her goals.

- At times, Dorothea Dix managed to limit what Clara could accomplish because “Dragon Dix” did not appreciate independent female nurses outside her control. (Dix had been appointed the Superintendent of Female Nurses.)

- She established a network of “dear sisters” who donated many of the supplies she gave to the troops. She was skilled in thanking donors well and in letting them know exactly what the soldiers needed (Oates 19).

- Clara was almost killed at Antietam while helping a wounded man. While lifting his head to give him a drink, a bullet passed through her sleeve and into his chest. She never mended the hole (Oates 85). Once she was called to help Mary Hartwell – a wounded girl who dressed in Union uniform while looking for her fiancé (Oates 91-92). In another incident, she (reluctantly) removed a bullet from the cheek of a (pleading) wounded soldier – with a pocketknife (Clara Barton NHS). She was under fire for most of the battle. Clara supplied an entire field hospital, showed unbelievable courage, and was probably the only northern female nurse during the battle (Oates 91).

- Clara felt that God was working His will through Abraham Lincoln, and the Emancipation Proclamation was evidence of this (Oates 95).

- While crossing a pontoon bridge at the Battle of Fredericksburg (Dec. 1862), part of Clara’s skirt was torn off by a shell fragment (Oates 108). The temperatures dropped overnight and men were freezing to death … Clara had helpers tear down chimneys and heat bricks to keep the men warm (Oates 115).

At Fredericksburg she began to record notes about dying soldiers – who they were, how they died, where they were buried.
• She suppressed two Brady photographs of herself because one “looked like death on the pale horse” and the other was a “horrorgraph” (Oates 121, 133).

• Clara’s “Office of Correspondence with Friends of the Missing Men of the United States Army” was established to learn the fate of missing men. It was created by a brief statement from Lincoln shortly before he died and operated for about five years.

**Interesting Post-War Information:**

• During 1866-1868, Clara always wore black silk while lecturing about her wartime experiences. She earned the same fees as popular male speakers. However, she didn’t like lecturing and it made her ill. The lectures made her a legend, though, and helped her future relief work (Pryor 148-149).

• After the war, thousands of babies were named “Clara” in her honor.

• While helping the International Red Cross in France, Clara realized that handouts hurt people in the long run. She felt the Red Cross’s goals should be education and self-help (Pryor 163-164).

• After the massive Ohio River floods in 1884, “The Little Six” [children] from Waterford, PA raised $51.25 by putting on a variety show. In turn, Clara used the funds to help a widow with six children. Clara was skilled at putting a human face on disasters … this raised money AND had press appeal (Pryor 234-235).

• As a representative for the American Association of the Red Cross, Clara was the first female American diplomat (Pryor ix). It bothered her that she received recognition from other countries for her Red Cross work, but very little from her country or her family (Pryor 174, 185-186).

• One Red Cross aide called her “the Queen” because of her difficult, “bossy” nature (Pryor xi). She lost her sense of humor because of harsh criticism from rivals and she was convinced that no one liked her. She desperately needed praise and approval from her friends (Pryor 213-214).

• Clara was forced to resign from the Red Cross (a combination of personality conflicts and internal politics). After this she helped form the National First Aid Association of America – but because First Aid was a concept “test driven” by Clara during her Red Cross days, the Red Cross claimed the idea belonged to them.

• Today, the property which includes the Clara Barton Birthplace Museum also includes the Barton Center for Diabetes Education. Its mission is “to improve the lives of children with insulin-dependent diabetes through education, recreation, and support programs which inspire and empower” (www.bartoncenter.org/about/index.php). According to the center’s website, a women’s association bought the home and 96 acres of land in 1921. That same year, two Canadian physicians discovered insulin. By 1925, the women had established a fresh-air camp for inner-city children. Dr. Elliot Joslin, one of the first doctors to use insulin to treat children with diabetes, joined them in 1932 to create the Clara Barton Birthplace Camp for diabetic children (www.bartoncenter.org).

**Strengths**

• Clara was unbelievably determined when trying to reach her goals – whether it was helping soldiers in the Civil War, founding the Red Cross – or holding on to her power at the Red Cross.

• Despite her lifelong battle with depression, Clara was extremely strong. She found ways to overcome her illness.

• Clara was very patriotic and devoted to her country, even when she didn’t agree with its choices (such as the Spanish-American War and the decision not to support the Geneva Convention).

• She knew that war and disaster victims needed to regain their dignity – whenever possible they were taught to be self-reliant.
• Clara was compassionate towards soldiers, civilians, and disaster victims.

• She was generous – opening her home to people who needed help (financial, medical, emotional), and giving large amounts of her own money to the Red Cross (relief efforts as well as administrative needs). (However, this “mixing of money” caused problems down the road, as you will read later.)

• Clara was skilled at persuasion -- using emotional and logical appeals, her excellent speaking skills, and her extensive work record.

• When necessary, Clara could cultivate relationships with people helpful to her causes. She was also good at adapting programs to appeal to her audience (for example, adding peacetime applications to the Red Cross because the United States would not accept it otherwise).

• Clara believed in equal rights for all – regardless of race and gender.

• In later years, when Clara suffered wave after wave of personal attacks, she was urged by friends to attack her opponents publicly, but she would not do so. After she resigned from the Red Cross she refused to even speak of the difficulties there.

**Weaknesses**

• Clara’s tendencies towards depression, paranoia and psychosomatic illnesses caused huge suffering over her lifetime and limited her potential.

• Because of her difficult childhood, Clara desperately needed public acclaim and approval. In some ways, she was just as needy as the people she helped. The Red Cross might have been better served if she had stayed in Glen Echo keeping records, cultivating relationships in Washington, DC, encouraging local chapters, streamlining programs and/or gathering volunteers.

• Clara’s assistants, Red Cross board members and local Red Cross groups felt that she was too dictatorial.

• Her lack of administrative skills – especially record keeping and delegating – hurt the Red Cross (and hurt her personally).

• At times she embellished her stories in an attempt to give people what they wanted to hear or to make herself appear indispensable.

• Clara blamed other people for the Red Cross’s problems – not herself. She took criticism very personally and was extremely offended when she felt people were “disloyal” to her. This was because, in many ways, she was the Red Cross. Attacking the Red Cross was attacking *Clara*.

**Notable Words:**

• To nephew Bernard Vassall, after she had lost her job in the Patent Office: “Were you in my place you would ... wish, and pine, and fret in your cage as I do, and if the very gentlemen who have the power could only know for 24 hours all that oppresses and gnaws at my peace they would offer me something to do in accordance with my old habits and capabilities before I am a week older, but they will never know and I shall always be oppressed no doubt” (Oates 12-13).

• About the caning of Charles Sumner by Preston Brooks: “I have often said that *that night* war began! It began not at Sumter, but at Sumner” (Pryor 63).

• In response to the army’s response that it had more than enough nurses (December 1861): “If we New England people saw men lying in camp uncared for until their toes rotted from their feet, with not persons enough about them to take care of them, we should think they needed more nurses” (Oates 30-31).
To friend Mary Norton, after the Seven Days' Campaign:
“I only wish I could work to some purpose. I have no right to these easy comfortable days and our poor men suffering and dying thirsting in this hot sun and I so quiet here in want of nothing, it is not rightly distributed, my lot is too easy and I am sorry for it” (Oates 50).

Arriving home after the Battle of Fredericksburg, and finding a gift of ladies' wear for her wardrobe:
“I was not alone, and then and there I re-dedicated myself to my little work of humanity, pledging before God all that I have, all that I am, all that I can, and all that I hope to be, to the cause of justice and mercy, and patriotism, my country and my God’ (Oates 120).

March 13, 1864 -- Clara remembering the wounded black soldiers who fought at Ft. Wagner, July 1863:
“I can never forget the patient bravery with which they endured their wounds received in the cruel assault upon Wagner, as hour upon hour they lay in the wet sands... whenever I met one who was giving his life out with his blood, I could not forbear hastening to tell him lest he die in ignorance of the truth, that he was the soldier of Freedom he had sought to be, and that the world as well as Heaven would so record it...” (Oates 176).

June 1864, after mass casualties at the Wilderness and Cold Harbor:
"We are waiting at the cotside and closing their eyes one by one as they pass away ... I cannot but think that we shall win at last, but oh the cost....” (Oates 241).

Her inner conflict about going to help the soldiers, in an undated speech between 1866-1868:
"I struggled long and hard with my sense of propriety, with the appalling fact that I was a woman whispering in one ear, and groans of suffering men, dying like dogs, unfed and unsheltered, for the life of the very institutions which had protected and educated me, thundering in the other. I said that I struggled with my sense of propriety, and I say it with shame before God and before you, I am ashamed that I thought of such a thing” (Oates 374).

Defending her position on suffrage, after the 1869 Equal Rights Association meeting, NY:
“...no person in that house would or could be more rejoiced than I to see the franchise bestowed upon every person capable of using it without regard to race, color or sex, but if the door was not wide enough for all at once then I for one was willing the old scarred slave limp through before me...but I should claim the right to go next, and immediately” (Oates 379).

Appealing to former soldiers to support women's suffrage, in a post-war speech:
“Soldiers! I have worked for you – and I ask you now, one and all, that you consider the wants of my people.... God only knows women were your friends in time of peril – and you should be hers now” (Pryor 151).

About the decision to start sewing “work rooms” in Strasbourg, France in 1870:
“[Food handouts would] make of them permanent beggars and vagrants, thus doing for their morale all that the bombardment had done for their physical condition” (Pryor 163-164).

About her days at the Dansville Sanitarium, 1876-1877:
“One sometimes needs to be saved from himself” (Pryor 187).

About her difficulties in getting the United States to sign the Geneva Convention, January 17, 1878:
“[Every] civilized nation on the earth but ours, has signed the convention, or Treaty, we alone, class with the barbarians” (Pryor 193).

Diary entry in 1888, commenting on her ability to connect with so many of the women in the Massachusetts Reformatory Prison for Women:
“Surely we must be too near alike, if not akin, or they would never have clung to me with that pitiful love” (Pryor 228).
• Clara on criticism, 1898:
“The paths of charity are over roadways of ashes, and one who would tread them must be prepared to meet opposition, misconstruction, jealousy and calumny. Let his work be that of angels, still it will not satisfy all” (Pryor 279).

• Clara on the National First Aid Association of America:
“What were the years of work in the old Civil War but First Aid...? What were Johnstown, the Sea Islands, Armenia, Galveston but First Aid” (Pryor 359)?

• On the growth of the Red Cross, April 2, 1906: “[The Red Cross] must grow; I want it to, it is my planting. I should rejoice the crop, no matter who harvests it” (Pryor 362).

How She Was Described By Others:

• An Antietam witness noted that Clara...
“...toiled as few men would have done, stanching wounds which might otherwise have proved fatal, administering cordials to the fainting soldier, cheering those destined to undergo amputation, moistening lips parched with thirst...” (Oates 85).

• Dr. James Dunn (who worked with Clara at Cedar Mountain and 2nd Bull Run), in a letter to his wife:
“In my feeble estimation, Gen. McClellan, with all his laurels, sinks into insignificance beside her...She is the true heroine of the age, the angel of the battlefield” (Oates 91).

• Major Edward Preston, Provost Marshall, in letter of introduction to the X Corps at Hilton Head, 1863:
“The smoke of battle, the roar of artillery and the shrieks of shot and shell do not deter her from administering to those who fall. She will explain all to you and I trust be able to do much good in the coming battles. Her she is highly respected and all bestow upon her great praise” (Oates 133).

• Col. John Elwell to Assistant Adjutant General Charles Halpine, April 7, 1863:
“She is the American Florence Nightingale & has without doubt seen more battlefields than any American woman.”

• The Jersey City Evening Journal, April 3, 1868, reporting on one of her post-war lectures:
“It was as if this gifted woman found our heartstrings and was skillfully playing a sad minor hymn on them.”

• Susan B. Anthony to Clara Barton, September 1876:
“I am so glad you are gaining strength & hope you may yet like to do as much for women’s emancipation as you did for the slaves & the soldiers – How gloriously our movement would go on, if it had the like of your hand, brain & heart to organize, systematize, vitalize & marshal its forces —do get well, my dear, & come to the help of the weary & worn in the service of woman” (Pryor 198).

• Hannah Shepard of the Blue Anchor (a rival relief organization), in a letter to the editor of the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, November 14, 1882:
“The ‘Women’s National Relief Association’ does not ask Congressional aid. It is an association of women, not an association for one woman. It has ... in its membership, not one alone, but many of the blessed Florence Nightingales who served our wounded soldiers in the war” (Pryor 207).

• Antoinette Margot, Red Cross worker, commenting on Clara’s participation – as an equal to the men – in the September 1884 Red Cross Conference:
“Miss Barton has not proceeded to batter down opposing walls with a sledge hammer, but has quietly and skillfully opened a door with a well-turned key; it will never be closed” (Pryor 240).
• **Henry Bellows, describing Clara in 1882:**
  “If she had belonged to the other sex, she would have been a merchant prince, a great general, or a trusted political leader” (Pryor 212).

• **Sarah J. Elliot, Johnstown (PA) acquaintance, to Clara in 1890:**
  “To what you are as a woman – I said my first ‘I am glad I am a woman.’ Further, as I worked with you – as you educated me in the work of other women, I heard for the first time of those other women crying for help” (Pryor 286).

• **Robert Ogden, Philadelphia Red Cross, to Spencer Trask, Dec. 31, 1895:**
  “Her judgment was so poor, her methods so loose and her statements so inaccurate that cooperation was impossible” (Pryor 270).

• **Senator Redfield Proctor, of Clara’s relief work in Cuba**
  “I had known and esteemed her for many years, but had not half appreciated her capability and devotion to her work. I specially looked into her business methods, fearing that here would be the greatest danger of mistake … but found she could teach me on these points…In short I saw nothing to criticize, but everything to commend. The American people may be assured that their bounty will reach the sufferers with the least possible cost and in the best manner in every respect” (Pryor 304).

• **Dr. Julian Hubbell, Clara’s assistant, of her relief work in Cuba – when she was 77 years old:**
  “Even to us who know so well Miss Barton’s powers of endurance it seems a marvel when we think of all the mental as well as physical strain which she has endured during the past months of Cuban work” (Pryor 311).

• **Mabel Boardman, defending her decision not to allow a plaque to Clara Barton in the new Red Cross headquarters, July 11, 1916:**
  “Her connection with the Red Cross is like a skeleton in the closet upon which the doors have been closed” (Pryor 341).

• **A reporter, surprised to find elderly Clara on her hands and knees – wearing a faded sunbonnet and old knitted shawl pinned with a huge royal jewel – while mending a sidewalk:**
  “[It seemed] to epitomize her whole life, a life of mending broken things – broken bodies, broken lives – her face always hidden from the world but bent upon the work needing her, and the great jewel of sympathy shining in her heart” (Pryor 361).
Timeline of Events:

- Dec. 25, 1821  Clara (Clarissa) was born in North Oxford, MA. She was the youngest of five children.
- 1833-1835  Her brother David fell from a barn and was seriously injured. Clara helped nurse him back to health for two years. After David was “cured” she looked for “purpose” again – nursing poor families during a smallpox epidemic and tutoring poor children (Pryor 16-17).
- 1836  Mr. L.N. Fowler, a phrenologist, advised Clara’s parents that she should be a teacher.
- 1839  Clara taught near Oxford, MA. In 1845 she started a school for the children of mill workers – despite not being able to talk at town meetings because of being a woman.
- 1850-1851  Attended Clinton Liberal Institute in Oneida County, NY. She was ten years older than most of the other students, and spent most of her time studying – taking all of the classes she could take. While she was at school her mother Sarah died.
- Oct. 1851  Taught at Hightstown, NJ.
- 1852-1854  Started the first free public school in Bordentown, NJ. Soon the town built a new school to hold all 600 students. Town leaders, however, felt that it was more appropriate for a man to direct the school and they hired a male principal at twice her salary. Angered, she left Bordentown – as well as teaching (Clara Barton NHS, National Park Service [CBNHS]).
- 1854-1855  Clara moved to Washington, DC, where she worked for Charles Mason, the Commissioner of Patents. Her salary was the same as the men. The men resented her, but Clara endured their harassment. From 1855-1857, her job was reduced from clerk to copyist (CBNHS). From 1857 to 1860 Clara lived in Massachusetts again, as the Buchanan administration eliminated her job. Clara suffered from major depression (Pryor 66).
- Fall 1860  Abraham Lincoln was elected president. Clara returned to her former job as a copyist. Once Clara felt useful again, her depression lifted.
- Apr. 12, 1861  The Civil War began with the firing of Ft. Sumter, South Carolina.
- Apr. 19, 1861  Transferring from one train station to another, several Union regiments, including the 6th Massachusetts Infantry, were attacked by a Pro-Southern mob in Baltimore, MD. Clara brought supplies from home and nursed several wounded men -- “her boys” (CBNHS).

Clara established a supply network with the women in North Oxford & Worcester (MA), and Hightstown (NJ). For the rest of the war, she distributed food and supplies to the wounded and needy. By June, Clara was a “one woman relief agency” (Oates 17).
- July 21, 1861  Union defeat at First Bull Run (First Manassas). Clara nursed Union wounded as they were brought to Washington, DC. She rented part of a warehouse near 7th and Pennsylvania Avenue – her “headquarters” – because so many supplies were donated (Oates 30).

Clara decided the battlefield was where she was needed most – but was afraid to shame her family by being “unladylike” (Oates 23).
• March 21, 1862  Clara’s father died, but before he died he encouraged her to go help Union soldiers on the field.
• March - July 1862  Peninsula Campaign. Clara had three warehouses of supplies but couldn’t help.

On July 11, 1862 she met Col. Daniel H. Rucker, Quartermaster Department, who issued a wagon and driver to take her supplies to the wharves and also a pass to and from Aquia Creek. He also helped her get a pass from Surgeon General William A. Hammond. Cautious, she also obtained a letter of introduction from the United States Sanitary Commission Headquarters. (Oates 52). After months of rejections and self-doubt, she had finally achieved her goal.

• August 9, 1862  Federal defeat at Cedar Mountain, VA. Several days later, Clara and two helpers, Cornelius Welles and Anna Carver arrived at Culpeper Courthouse Depot. Several hundred soldiers waited to be evacuated. They had dirty bandages and no one to help them. She was shocked by the chaos, filth and suffering (Oates 59-64). This was her first post-battle visit.

• Aug. 28-30, 1862  Federal defeat at Second Bull Run / Second Manassas, VA. Clara, Cornelius Welles and two assistants worked at Fairfax Station. Three thousand men waited beside the train tracks and on the hillsides, dying for lack of attention (Oates 68-69). Before this point she waited for newspaper accounts before she moved into action. Clara decided not to wait anymore.

Back home, Clara received a note: “Harper’s Ferry – not a moment to be lost” (Oates 78). She moved into action despite feeling ill and fearing she might have typhoid.

• Sept. 14, 1862  On the road, Clara heard the Battle of South Mountain. Later, she saw the aftermath of the fighting at Turner’s Gap – her first view of a real battlefield (Oates 79-80).

• Sept. 16, 1862  Clara, Welles and a teamster arrived at Antietam and waited for next day’s battle.

• Sept. 17, 1862  Battle of Antietam, MD. Union strategic victory. At a barn near the Poffenberger Farm she saw that the surgeons were out of supplies again and bandaging wounds with corn leaves (Oates 84-85). Clara worked tirelessly during the battle and for several days afterwards. When other nurses arrived, she was overwhelmed by typhoid and taken home to recover (Oates 94).

• Dec. 11-15, 1862  Battle of Fredericksburg, VA –huge Union loss. Clara helped at a hospital for the IX Corps at the Lacy House (Chatham). She also worked at dressing stations in Fredericksburg itself. Clara was haunted by the grisly, suicidal attacks ordered by Gen. Burnside (Oates 117-119).
April 1863 Clara went to Hilton Head, SC, far away from Dorothea Dix and Virginia politics. Here she befriended Colonel John Elwell (CBNHS).

May 1863 Clara’s interest in equal rights for women and African Americans grew while helping Frances Gage. She helped care for and educate former slaves and freedmen (CBNHS). Here she met Susie King Taylor, a former plantation slave who taught men of the 1st SC USCT to read and write, nursed their wounds, and worked as a laundress. (Connections: Read the Taylor biography.)

July 10-11, 1863 Siege of Ft. Wagner and several failed assaults (most memorably by the 54th and 55th Massachusetts). Clara helped wounded soldiers on the beach itself. Later she distributed supplies and set up field hospitals (Oates 173). An argument with an officer—who had confiscated her cooking and sleeping tents—left her extremely bitter and Clara returned to Washington.

March 1864 Clara was extremely depressed; in fighting to get back to the battlefield she briefly considered returning to the Patent Office or starting a lecturing career (Oates 213-215).

May-June 1864 Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse (Fredericksburg, VA); Cold Harbor, VA. With the help of Sen. Henry Wilson, Chair of the Military Affairs Committee, Clara arranged for private homes to be used to care for the wounded.

June 23, 1864 Clara joined Gen. Benjamin Butler, who put Clara in charge of diet and nursing at the X Corps hospitals at the Richmond-Petersburg line. She worked in “flying hospitals”—ready to move at an hour’s notice. After Butler was relieved of command she left (Oates 287-289).

Feb. 1865 Clara received permission from Bvt. Brig. Gen. William Hoffman, Commissary-General of Prisoners, to approach Col. F.D. Sewall about posting notices in the barracks at Camp Parole in Annapolis, MD. She hoped to talk with recuperating Union soldiers about soldiers who might still be prisoners in the south—whether they were living or dead, and if living, where they were located.

March 11, 1865 With Sen. Wilson’s help, Clara gained approval to locate missing soldiers. Lincoln issued a brief statement establishing the “Office of Correspondence with Friends of the Missing Men of the United States Army”. She worked at this for four years.

April 9, 1865 Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Within a few months, all of the Confederate armies would surrender. The Civil War was over. On April 15, Abraham Lincoln died, assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, a popular actor and Southern sympathizer.

Summer 1865 Grave identification at Andersonville Prison, GA. Clara worked with Dorence Atwater (an Andersonville survivor who kept death records). Together they worked with Capt. James Moore to identify and mark the graves of 13,000 soldiers. Moore was hostile to Clara and Dorence, but on August 17, 1865, the Andersonville National Cemetery was finally dedicated (Oates 317, 335).

Feb. 14, 1866 Atwater’s Andersonville death register was published as a 74 page pamphlet in Horace Greeley’s New York Tribune (Oates 362). It was a victory for Dorence, Clara and the American people. The War Department had not wanted the list published—threatening Atwater with jail time—and James Moore was trying to beat Barton and Atwater to the presses with his own list.

Feb. 21, 1866 During the 39th Congress Clara was called to testify about Andersonville and the state of the African-Americans in the area. Hers was the only female testimony in the Joint Committee on Reconstruction (Oates 365).

In March, Congress appropriated $15,000 to reimburse Clara for expenses related to her search for missing men (CBNHS).
1866-1868 Midwest and Northeast lecture circuit, telling of her wartime experiences. Clara lectured until December 1868 when she lost her voice (and part of her eyesight) due to mental and physical exhaustion (CBNHS, Pryor 154). She met Josephine Griffing who helped establish the Freedmen’s Bureau. Griffing taught them to repair and sort donated government materials – Clara took this lesson to the Red Cross in later years (Pryor 153).

1869 Clara closed the Office of Correspondence with Friends of the Missing Men. She had identified 22,000 missing men and received and answered 63,182 letters (CBNHS).

Sept. 1869 Following doctor’s orders, Clara went to Europe. She met Dr. Louis Appia while in Switzerland and learned about the International Red Cross, part of the Geneva Convention. She was amazed that the United States knew of the Red Cross and had no interest (Pryor 156-157).

1870 The Franco-Prussian war began on July 18 when Napoleon III of France declared war on Prussia and its German allies. Clara became friends with Louise, the Grand Duchess of Baden, Germany (the daughter of Kaiser Wilhelm the First). Louise helped Clara get involved in wartime relief work. Clara and Antoinette Margot helped siege evacuees at Strasbourg, France by providing aid and starting sewing factories – so there would be jobs for women and clothing for the people (CBNHS). However, Clara also embellished her tales, saying that she had been at major battles when she hadn’t – this would haunt her later on (Pryor 161).

1871 Clara worked in Paris, Lyon, Besancon and Belfort, France—often meeting hostility and suspicion (she was an unmarried American woman abroad).

1872-1876 Clara suffered from nervous exhaustion and lost her eyesight again. She traveled in Europe for a while. In March 1873 she was awarded the Iron Cross of Germany from Kaiser Wilhelm the First. She returned to the United States in October, but when her sister Sally died in May 1874, she had a complete nervous collapse (Pryor 174-178).

In 1876 she moved to a progressive sanitarium in Dansville, NY. Later that year she moved to a cottage near the sanitarium—recovering with relaxation, good company and a healthy diet. She gave poetry readings and unlike previous years, she found female friends (Pryor 179-183).

She met Julian Hubbell; was a devoted worker and aide until her death (CBNHS).

1877-1881 Clara focused on support for an American branch of the Red Cross. Fearing negative publicity after Andersonville problems, she claimed the Red Cross approached her first (Pryor 188-189).

In 1878, with Joseph Sheldon, she wrote a pamphlet, “The Red Cross of the Geneva Convention: What It Is”. She added a paragraph about peacetime applications of the Red Cross (Pryor 195). Clara supported the women’s movement – but not too closely for fear of hurting her Red Cross project (Pryor 198). She cultivated the favor of the Associated Press and the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) – Union veterans who recognized her as a heroine (Pryor 199-201).

May 21, 1881 Creation of the American Association of the Red Cross. On June 9, 1881, Clara was elected its first president. The first local chapter was formed in Dansville, NY (Pryor 204-207). The new organization struggled with fundraising and with directing distant Red Cross chapters. Also, Clara was not good at record keeping and she rarely delegated duties to others (Pryor 218-219). Several rival relief organizations appeared at the same time.

Fall 1881 Michigan Forest Fires. Nearly 500 lives were lost and 1.5 million acres of forest were destroyed— in five hours. Clara’s American Red Cross helped to rebuild 50 homes and distributed relief materials. Julian Hubbell was the first American Red Cross field agent (CBNHS).

Mar. 16, 1882 The United States joined the International Red Cross when President Chester Alan Arthur signed the Treaty of Geneva on March 1st (Pryor 209-210). This was a huge victory for Clara.
• Spring 1882-1883 The Mississippi River flooded and Clara directed Red Cross relief work aboard the *Mattie Belle*. Hubbell was able to promote the idea of local Red Cross Chapters – there was a need to be prepared and to be able to move quickly in disasters such as this one (Pryor 220-221).

• May 1883 Mass. Gov. Benjamin Butler appointed Clara the Superintendent of the Massachusetts Reformatory Prison for Women. She accepted but resigned after 8 months (CBNHS). She felt many prisoners were victims of society, “more often weak than wicked; more often sinned against than sinning”. She treated them with dignity and they respected her (Pryor 226).

• Feb. 1884 The Ohio River flooded, leaving thousands homeless. Clara directed relief efforts. She realized that it was best to supplement, not compete with government and local relief efforts (Pryor 233). Clara enjoyed personal contact and public acclaim, but her assistants covered her mistakes. She began to tire easily, and also tended to blame others, not herself (Pryor 237-238, 282).

• Aug. 1884 Clara was one of three delegates to the Red Cross International Conference in Geneva. This made Clara the first female diplomatic representative in the United States. The group officially adopted her “American Amendment”, allowing for peacetime disaster relief (Pryor 238-239).

• 1884 and 1885 The American Red Cross provided relief assistance in the December 1884 typhoid fever epidemic in Dansville, NY and the November 1885 fires in Galveston, TX. In 1885, Clara wrote a series of feminist “dispatches” from Dakota Territory for the *Woman’s Journal*. Unfortunately, Clara was never in Dakota Territory.

• 1886 In September, Clara traveled to Charleston, SC, to provide help after an earthquake. The Red Cross donated $500, but the city would not accept other help (CBNHS).

• 1888 Clara was the featured speaker at Washington’s 1st International Woman’s Suffrage Conference (Pryor 253-254). In February, 3000 people were left homeless after a tornado in Mount Vernon, IL. Clara and the Red Cross established a school and provided food, shelter and clothing (CBNHS). In March, her beloved brother David died. In August, there was a yellow fever epidemic in Jacksonville, FL. Clara visited to coordinate local relief. The New Orleans Red Cross sent nurses immune to the disease (Pryor 255).

• May 31, 1889 A severe flood in Johnstown, PA left thousands homeless –killing over 2000 people. In four months, $239,000 in money and supplies was provided (CBNHS, Pryor 260-261).

• 1891 Using wood from Johnstown’s “Red Cross Hotel,” Clara had a warehouse built in Glen Echo, MD.


• February 1893 A huge reception was held to celebrate a gift of 782 acres of land from Joseph and Enola Gardner. Unfortunately, the land was titled to Clara, not the Red Cross (Pryor 270).

• 1893-1894 The Red Cross spent ten months helping nearly 30,000 people living in the South Carolina barrier islands after a hurricane and tidal wave left 5,000 people dead (CBNHS). This was done with a minimum of money – a huge accomplishment. Still, Clara was criticized for “ignoring” whites and “favoring” blacks (Pryor 280).
• 1896  Clara went overseas to help sick and starving Armenian famine victims. Despite a dangerous religious war she distributed $115,000 in aid and improved farming, hygiene and household industry (CBNHS).

Clara was bound to aid both needy Armenians and Turks. Americans didn’t want impartiality – they wanted “justice” – Clara was caught in the middle. She took their criticism personally (Pryor 291-292, 295). However, she was awarded a medal from the Turks – the Second Order of Shekafet – never before given to a woman (Pryor 295).

• Feb. 1897  Clara moved to the warehouse at Glen Echo – it was remodeled and became Clara’s permanent home for the rest of her life – as well as the Red Cross national headquarters.

• 1898  Cuban insurgents revolted against Spain. Spain placed the rebels in “reconcentrados” (“resettlement” camps). About 1/3 of the population died due to filth and exposure. Hurt by earlier criticism, Clara didn’t want to go to Cuba. When she did, she reported that “the massacres of Armenia seemed merciful in comparison.” Relief continued until 1900. (Pryor 296-303).

• Feb. 15, 1898  Explosion of the USS Maine with 266 people killed. Clara wrote President William McKinley, “I am with the wounded” (CBNHS). The source of the blast was never proven (Pryor 303).

• April 25, 1898  America declared war on Spain. Clara coordinated Civilian relief, started orphanages and helped military hospitals. Just like Antietam, the field hospitals were largely unprepared (Pryor 309) – and female nurses were feared to be “flighty” and “skittish” (Pryor 312). She met Col. Theodore Roosevelt and cared for wounded Rough Riders and other soldiers.

• 1899  Clara published a 700 page volume entitled The Red Cross in Peace and War.

• June 1900  At 78, Clara tried to resign from the Red Cross. Her resignation was ignored and she was reelected president.

• Sept. 1900  A hurricane and tidal wave left 6,000 dead in Galveston, TX. Clara supervised relief work, distributing $120,000 in money and supplies – and over a million strawberry plants (CBNHS). (Strawberries were a large crop in this area.) This was Clara’s last major work in the field.

• Dec. 1903  Butler, PA endured a typhoid epidemic; Clara distributed supplies then let local groups take over.
• 1904  Clara’s *A Story of the Red Cross* was published.

• May 1904  After a long and difficult fight, Clara resigned as President of the American National Red Cross. She had faced growing opposition because of her age, style of management, and ability (CBNHS). Mabel Boardman had launched an all-out attack to remove Clara, using ugly accusations; Clara, in turn, resorted to “sneaky” scheming (Pryor 339-341). Eventually, Mabel Boardman was elected as the new president (Pryor 355).

They tried to take all her papers, office furniture and supplies, but decided against taking her house at Glen Echo (made with Red Cross materials) because of bad publicity (Pryor 355-357).

• 1905  In April, Clara helped start the National First Aid Association of America and was its honorary president. They promoted basic first aid instruction, developed first aid kits, and promoted emergency preparedness. They also formed ambulance brigades, added to police and fire departments (CBNHS). The program thrived, but it had failed in the Red Cross in 1903.

• 1907  *The Story of My Childhood* was published.

• 1908  The National First Aid Association of America grew very successful. But the Red Cross decided that since Clara had worked with first aid in 1903 as part of the Red Cross, they could claim the program. First Aid became part of the Red Cross programming in 1909, with War Department backing. The First Aid Association soon disbanded (Pryor 365-366).

In the last few years of her life, Clara attended several women’s and Grand Army of the Republic conventions. But in grieving the loss of the Red Cross, the deaths of friends her own age, and her increasing physical problems, Clara began to isolate herself from others.

• April 12, 1912  Clara died at her home in Glen Echo after a long battle with pneumonia, at the age of 90. She was buried at her family plot in Oxford, MA.

Her last words were, “Let me go! Let me go!”
Information Sources

Barton, Clara.


Library of Congress.


National Park Service.


Connections to the NCSS Curriculum Strands (with points for student exploration):

I. Culture

What was the “proper” role of American women at the start of the Civil War? Why wasn’t it “proper” for women to be nurses? What occupations were open to women in the early 1800s versus the early 1900s? When did nursing become a primarily-female occupation?

During the Civil War, what was acceptable behavior for a “lady”, and how did this hinder or help her activities on the battlefield and at disaster sites? What “ladylike” behaviors did Clara accept, and what behaviors did she abandon”? Why did her father’s approval – on his deathbed – mean the world to Clara?

How would Clara’s experience as a New England woman be different from the experience of a woman on a Southern plantation?

What are some of the cultural changes (roles of men and women, religious movements, clothing and style, role of education, and many other aspects of life), that occurred over Clara Barton’s 90-year lifetime? What are some aspects of culture that did not change?

Clara’s sister, Dolly, was mentally ill and violent – and as such she was locked away in a separate room of the house. The family would not have spoken about Dolly to outsiders. Why not? How much of our perspective about mental illness – including depression – has changed since the 1800s? How much has not changed?

How do our beliefs and experiences as members of Americans in the 21st century affect our view of 19th century life?

II. Time, Continuity and Change

What was it like to be a northern woman in the 1800s and early 1900s? A southern woman? How were the lives of northern and southern men different, over all? How have the life experiences of women (north and south, east and west) grown more and more similar over the years? Why?

How have the lives of children changed from the 1800s to now?

Compare children’s lives (then and now) in these areas: northern – southern – eastern – western; urban – rural; and Anglo – African American – Hispanic – Native American – other minorities. What other comparisons / contrasts can you think of?

What was it like to live in Washington, DC during the Civil War? What is life in Washington, DC like today?

How did the Civil War – and other wars – open doors for women like Clara?

It might be said that Clara Barton initiated the POW/MIA (prisoner of war/ missing in action) movement. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Why is it said that the North “won” the Civil War but “lost” Reconstruction? What was the Joint Committee on Reconstruction?

Why is it significant that Clara Barton was the only woman to testify in front of the Committee?

Why was the Patent Office created? How has the office changed from the 1800s to now?

How was the Red Cross created? What changes did it see over Clara’s lifetime? What Red Cross’s role today?

Why should Americans preserve their historical past? What steps can be taken to preserve our past for future generations? What lessons can we learn, as a nation, from the Civil War and from Reconstruction?

III. People, Places and Environments

Why was Washington, D.C. so vulnerable (to enemy attack and/or disease) during the Civil War?

Why did the assault on Ft. Wagner fail?

Clara worked at the Sea Islands in South Carolina – how was/ is the culture there different from other parts of the country? What natural resources were available there?
Why were prison camps – especially Andersonville, GA and the “reconcentrados’ in Cuba – so deadly? What other prison camps in the Civil War (north and south) were deadly? Where are many of the soldiers from these camps buried?

What natural disasters occurred during Clara Barton’s lifetime, and could the residents have been more prepared to face the disasters? What disaster warning devices and systems exist today that did not exist in Clara’s lifetime?

Why was it essential that the Red Cross have many local chapters, not just one national chapter?

Clara helped the people of Galveston, TX after a devastating hurricane that killed and wounded thousands, and left even more homeless and without a livelihood. Why was the Galveston hurricane so deadly? In what ways are we better prepared, today, to prepare for hurricanes? Today, more and more people are moving to areas which are prone to hurricanes – what is the effect of this migration? Should insurance companies provide insurance for new houses built in these areas? Why or why not?

Why did the Johnstown (PA) flood happen? Could it have been prevented? What was Clara’s role, and the role of the Red Cross, after the disaster? What are some examples of songs and poems written about the Great Johnstown Disaster? The Red Cross built “Red Cross Hotels” at Johnstown – what were they, and why were they so successful? What happened to the building materials after the hotels were taken down?

If we lost Civil War battlefields to development, how would this affect our understanding of how people, places & environments interacted during the CW?

IV. Individual Development and Identity

As a child, why did she feel that she didn’t completely belong in the male or female spheres of life? How did Clara attempt to meet her intense emotional and mental needs throughout her life? How did her childhood, her teaching struggles, and her Civil War struggles shape her personality and her later life?

What outside-the-home professions were open to women in the 1800s? How did Clara accept or rebel against these “opportunities”?

What “ladylike” behaviors did Clara accept, and what behaviors did she abandon? Why?

How did Clara’s personality and upbringing affect her administrative style during the Red Cross years?

Why did the men of the GAR (Grant Army of the Republic – Union Veterans) adore Clara – and why did local Red Cross groups often dislike Clara?

What was Clara’s role in the early feminist movement?

Why did Clara feel “betrayed” by younger women – women for whom her work had opened doors?

V. Individuals, Groups and Institutions

How does the institution of the family affect one’s life? How did it shape Clara’s life? How have the institutions of family, church and school changed since Clara’s lifetime? Are these changes for better or for worse? What forces have changed and influenced them?

Why did the North Oxford mill workers’ children not have a school before Clara Barton stepped in? What were Clara Barton’s feelings about education – public education as well as her own?

Why was it difficult for women to work in government offices during Clara Barton’s lifetime? Why is it so significant that Clara was one of the first women to work for the Federal Government – at the same rate of pay as men?

Clara was a member of the Universalist church – what is the Universalist Church? What religious movements have occurred since the 1800s?

VI. Power, Authority and Governance

What were Clara’s struggles with the male-dominated bureaucracy in Washington, DC – and also within the Union army? When did she succeed and when did she fail?

How did Abraham Lincoln’s assassination change the course of Reconstruction?
How was Clara and Dorence Atwater’s struggle – to identify and publish the names of the Andersonville dead – also a struggle to make their government accountable to the needs of the American people?

How did Clara’s testimony before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction impact the process of Reconstruction itself?

Clara met with several presidents and their cabinets in trying to establish the Red Cross (which meant convincing the United States to accept the Geneva Convention). Who are the members of a presidential cabinet and what are their functions? When did women appear in the presidential cabinet?

What is the Geneva Convention? How does it affect a nation’s international power? How does it create an intersection between national power and human rights – insuring (on paper, anyway) that a nation will respect human rights, even in “times of war”? How is a “time of war” defined, and how has this definition changed over time? Why has the definition changed?

How did Clara struggle to maintain her power in the Red Cross? How was she eventually “ousted”, and why? How were Mabel Boardman’s political and social connections involved in Clara’s removal?

During the Spanish-American War, many doctors would not accept help from Clara and her nurses – so they visited the Cuban hospitals next door. Why didn’t the American doctors want Red Cross help? Why and how did the Red Cross return to the American hospitals?

VII. Production, Consumption and Distribution

How did Clara’s Civil War relief efforts fill the needs not met by the Union army?

What are the effects of a long-lasting siege – like the one Clara witnessed at Strasbourg, France, during the Franco-Prussian War – or the many sieges during the American Civil War?

What are several ways that the creation of sewing factories helped Strasbourg after the siege? What similar methods were used after the Galveston, TX the Sea Islands (South Carolina) hurricanes? How did this fit in with Clara’s philosophy concerning human dignity?

Why was the creation of many Red Cross chapters so important in terms of distribution of emergency supplies?

VIII. Science, Technology and Society

Clara’s favorite sister, Dolly, became violently mentally ill. She was locked in a room in the house, which was common in Clara’s day. From what mental illness might Dolly have been suffering? How has treatment changed since Clara’s day? What roles do genetics and environment play in mental illness?

How did medical treatment during the Civil War differ from medical treatment today?

In Clara’s day, what did doctors know about the spread of diseases such as typhoid, malaria, yellow fever, dysentery, and so on? What actually caused the diseases? Where (and when) do these diseases still occur?

Why was the Union army – especially the medical department – so poorly prepared for battle during the Civil War and the Spanish-American War?

What item was used to dress battle wounds when Union surgeons ran out of bandages at Antietam? Why would this be so incredibly dangerous?

Many, many new technologies were created during Clara’s 90 year lifetime – and Clara embraced them eagerly. What were some important inventions in this time period? How did these new technologies affect American society – in both expected and unexpected ways (for example, the automobile)?
What disaster warning systems exist today that did not exist in Clara’s lifetime?

After Hurricane Gustav in 2008, a presidential candidate sent a text message to his supporters, asking that they give five dollars by calling or visiting the Red Cross website. What other new technologies is the Red Cross using? What new technologies are used by meteorologists? What new technologies are used in the military – especially, in Clara Barton’s case, in communications, health and logistics?

**IX. Global Connections**

How was the International Red Cross founded, and how did Clara Barton hear about it? What lessons did Clara learn from the International Red Cross? What was the “Monroe Doctrine”? How did this prevent America from accepting the Geneva Convention for so long? What is the “Geneva Convention”? Once the United States finally accepted the Geneva Convention, Clara could set up an American Red Cross. When did the United States finally accept the Geneva Convention, and what was Clara’s role?

How has the rise in terrorism affected how nations’ view the principles of the Geneva Convention?

Which European leaders did Clara meet in her lifetime? How was she honored by these leaders? Why did Clara receive such warm recognition from other nations – but not from her own nation or family?

Why didn’t the United States want to help Russia during the 1892 famine – leaving relief to Clara and other organizations?

Why did the Armenian massacres of 1896 take place, and when have similar man-made disasters happened since then?

Why did the Spanish-American war happen? Do we know who really blew up the *USS Maine*?

Why did the Spanish place Cuban “insurgents” in “reconcentrados” (“resettlement camps”)? When and where has this happened since then?

**X. Civic Ideals and Practices**

How did Clara demonstrate great patriotism during the Civil War – despite the fact that the government leaders and even Union generals were often working against her? Would you have had the same drive and determination?

Are there ways that you can use your “weaknesses” to help assist others more needy than you?

How did Clara work to help others throughout her life – in the Civil War, with the Red Cross, and with the National First Aid Association of America? Why?

What was Clara’s involvement with the feminist movement of the 1800s and early 1900s? Do you think she should have been more involved – why or why not?

Why did Clara believe that African Americans (males) should be given the right to vote before women? With whom was this idea popular – or unpopular?

How was Clara right in that first aid would affect more people worldwide than the Red Cross ever would? Have you taken a first aid course? What would the benefits be for you, your family and friends, and your school?
Six Pillars of Character from CHARACTER COUNTS!

Trustworthiness:

- Clara had the courage to do the right thing – for example, risking her reputation to help soldiers, fighting to get the Andersonville death list published, and fighting to clear Dorence Atwater’s name.
- She was very loyal to her friends and family. It’s especially remarkable that she was so loyal to her family, given her background.
- Clara was loyal to her country, even when she disagreed with its policies.

+/- She tried hard to establish a good reputation. Her wartime record and her lecture circuit established her as a national hero. Still, her lack of administrative skill in the Red Cross and her “embellishments” hurt her reputation in later years.

- Clara embellished stories of her exploits overseas, and claimed to write columns from places she had never visited. She did this to help the Red Cross and the feminist, but “the ends did not justify the means”.

- Clara did not keep accurate records during her Red Cross days, nor did she hire someone to do so. This led people to think she was dishonest with Red Cross money.

Respect:

+ Clara tried to cooperate with the social mores of the time, always bringing an escort when she went to the battlefield, soldier camps, and other male-dominated places.

+ Clara had self-respect. She treated others with respect and expected the same from them.

+ When friends tried to convince her to discredit her enemies publicly, in her books, she refused.

+ Clara didn’t want relief victims to feel like they were “begging” or “dependent” on charity. She tried to make them self-sufficient as soon as possible – she respected human dignity.

+ Clara showed respect to the women at the Massachusetts Reformatory Prison for Women – and received their respect in return. She did not feel superior to the women there.

+/- Clara dealt peacefully with insults and disagreements, accepting them silently, even when they hurt her deeply. However, if she had found a way to deal with these insults – rather than stewing about them – she would have been more productive in the long run.

- Clara was not tolerant of “disloyal” people who disagreed with her.

Responsibility:

+ Clara showed remarkable perseverance during the Civil War and in the founding of the Red Cross – working for years until she reached her goals.

+ Clara worked long hours, trying to be as useful as she could, when she helped soldiers during the Civil War.

+/- In helping “her boys” during the war, she neglected her job at the Patent Office. However, she did “hire” someone to take on her responsibilities.
She tended to think before she acted, even in high-pressure situations when she easily could have acted rashly. However, her feelings of persecution often caused her to come to the wrong conclusions.

She tended to blame others – instead of being accountable for her failures and problems.

**Fairness:**

+ Clara was willing for women to wait for the right to vote if that meant African Americans could gain some of their long-overdue rights.

+ She fought to defend Dorence Atwater and clear his name after he was jailed for allowing the Andersonville death list to be published by Horace Greeley.

+ Clara was unbiased in her Red Cross relief work – following Red Cross neutrality rules. When American surgeons rejected her help during the Spanish American War, she had no issue with helping the neighboring Cuban hospitals instead.

+ In her later years she was very supportive of the feminist movement, eloquently praising Julia Ward Howe, Susan B. Anthony, and other female pioneers.

-- Clara was not open to criticism, constructive or otherwise.

-- While her actions in trying to maintain control of the Red Cross were not illegal, they weren’t necessarily fair. Still, the accusations against her weren’t always fair either.

**Caring:**

+ Clara was disturbed by the scenes of immense suffering she witnessed over the years. She gave her best in helping the needy.

+ Clara was especially kind to dying soldiers, comforting them in their last moments.

+ Clara did not want soldiers to die unknown, their families not knowing what became of them. She recorded soldiers’ names, causes of death, and burial locations as early as Fredericksburg. She also headed the Office of Correspondence with Friends of the Missing Men of the United States Army.

+ She was very grateful to Col. Rucker (Quartermaster Department) and Massachusetts Sen. Wilson – both of whom helped her achieve many of her goals. Out of gratitude to Benjamin Butler, she took a position at the Massachusetts Reformatory Prison for Women – though she really didn’t want to.

+ People who visited Clara generally found her to be very kind and gentle.

+ From her cottage in Dansville, Clara held poetry readings for the community.

+ She cared about the status of women and African-Americans – in all aspects of their lives.

-- Clara was not forgiving of her “enemies”, real or perceived.
Citizenship:

+ Clara worked to get a school for the children of mill workers in North Oxford, MA. This group had been neglected.
+ She was an excellent schoolteacher with a contagious love of learning – which helped everyone in the communities where she served.
+ After her brother David was healed from his 2-year illness, she tutored poor children in her community and also helped during a typhoid outbreak.
+ Clara was extremely patriotic and caring, and desperately wanted to help wounded soldiers. She needed to obtain the cooperation of the government, the army, and various relief organizations in order to do so. Once she was able to help the wounded and give out supplies she realized she’d be more useful at the battlefield – and went through the whole process again to obtain permission to help at the field hospitals.
+ She immediately realized the benefits of having an American Red Cross and worked for several years, cultivating government relationships, until the dream became a reality. Through the Red Cross she worked to ease suffering across the country – and in Europe as well.
+ Clara was not cooperative with donors who “meddled” too much (by asking for reports or suggesting what she should do). She was also uncooperative with the Red Cross board – she often considered their criticism hurtful, not helpful. However, sometimes donors were “pushy”. And Clara recognized in June 1900 that she should resign – but the board ignored her resignation – 4 years before forcing her resignation.

A British Red Cross appeal to send donations for use in Belgium during World War I.

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Nine Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders
by the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership

1. **Listening**
   + Clara loved to listen to “her soldiers” and learn their needs – or just provide an ear for lonely wounded men.
   -- She did not listen well to others’ criticism – constructive or otherwise. It was all seen as a personal attack on Clara directly.

2. **Imagination**
   + She dreamed big dreams in opening high-functioning schools in New Jersey and Massachusetts. And the schools were a source of pride and comfort for the towns they served.
   + Her life’s work helped pave the way for future women to follow in her footsteps – opening new doors of opportunity. It was a big dream to work at battlefields and disaster zones, to earn the same pay as men, to meet with heads of state, to lead a major relief organization … and so on.

3. **Withdrawal**
   + When Clara went to Dansville Sanitarium, she was very aware that she needed to “fix” herself before she could “fix” others.
   +/- She was very good at listening to her inner voice. At times this would lead her to greatness, but at other times it would lead her to deep despair and bitterness.
   -- In later years, she lacked the awareness that she was NOT a good administrator and was not as physically able to handle difficult relief missions.
   -- Her paranoia and micromanagement caused even loyal Red Cross volunteers to abandon her. She needed to delegate authority to trustworthy assistants – but not complete authority.

4. **Acceptance and Empathy**
   + In a time when many Americans did not accept equal rights for African Americans, Clara sincerely wanted them to have a richer life experience based on equality.
   + Clara had deep convictions about the need for war and disaster victims to be treated with dignity. They didn’t need a handout as much as they needed to be able to provide for themselves and their families.
   +/- She was committed to the growth of her closest staff member, Julian Hubbell, when it suited her. It suited her to have a doctor on staff, so she encouraged him to get a medical degree. It did NOT suit her for Julian to get married – so she made things difficult until Julian’s “sweetheart” moved on.
   -- Clara did not like anyone to “outshine” her. When there was competition she “moved on”.
   -- She did NOT assume the good intentions of co-workers and colleagues – she assumed they were out to get her.
5. **Foresight**

+ Clara knew that the Union medical department’s lack of preparation would cause unnecessary suffering. She tried to compensate for this lack by being ahead of a battle – not waiting for newspaper accounts of the battle, when it was already too late.

+ She could see that the likely outcome of not having an American Red Cross would be unnecessary suffering for disaster victims.

+ From previous relief missions and her wartime work Clara learned how the Red Cross could be more effective. For example, on the Ohio River she learned to complement, not compete with, local and government relief. And from her days working with the Freedmen, she learned how to organize and stretch donations.

-- Clara should have seen that her lack of record keeping and administrative skills hindered the Red Cross and would eventually lead to her downfall.

6. **Awareness and Perception**

+ Clara clearly saw the needs of the northern medical department during the Civil War. She tried many times to use her connections to correct these problems – especially with Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson, Chair of the Military Affairs Committee. And sadly, she found that the medical department had improved very little by the time of the Spanish American War.

+ While her position was unpopular with radical feminists, Clara understood that the right to vote was only part of the picture regarding women’s rights. Almost every aspect of women’s lives needed improvement.

+/- Bordentown, NJ built a wonderful school to house all 600 of its school-aged children – because Clara’s little school grew until it couldn’t hold all of her eager pupils. But the town decided that it was “inappropriate” for a woman to lead the school. Clara resigned and took a fellow teacher (her best friend) with her. Yes, the town treated Clara unfairly, but she handled the situation less than gracefully. This caused conflict in the school and community.

-- Clara’s lack of administrative skills caused many local Red Cross chapters to either disappear or to abandon the national chapter so they could work on their own.

7. **Persuasion**

+ Clara used her political and military connections to persuade the government to allow her to work as an independent field agent. Over the years she maintained and cultivated these relationships.

+ Clara used (and cultivated) political connections to persuade the government to accept the Treaty of Geneva (Geneva Convention) and recognize the Red Cross. This took years to accomplish.

-- In later years, when she was losing the Red Cross, she tried to use force to maintain her control.

8. **Conceptualization**

+ She saw several ways to reform schools in Massachusetts and New Jersey – and she worked to move the reforms into reality.
Clara knew that helping others helped heal her own substantial hurts.

Clara dreamed of helping soldiers on the field and establishing an American Red Cross – in a time when the “woman’s sphere” was “in the home”.

Her love for “her soldiers” led her to record the places where soldiers died and were buried – solving the “missing in action” mystery for many families. It eventually led to the “Office of Correspondence with the Families of the Missing Soldiers of the United States Army” – a forerunner of the POW/MIA movement (Prisoner of War / Missing in Action).

Clara was good at “dreaming big dreams”, but she didn’t balance that skill with knowledge of day-to-day realities.

9. Healing

Her teamwork with Dorence Atwater in identifying and releasing the names of the Andersonville dead provided healing and closure for the victims’ families and for the nation.

Clara’s lecture circuit helped her listeners process the events of the Civil War and see at least a small grain of goodness, despite the death and suffering.

Her relief work provided physical, psychological and emotional healing to war and disaster victims.

The “Johnstown Hotels” which were built after the Johnstown, PA flood served an immediate need – shelter – but they also provided socialization and a sense of “normalcy”.

She was committed to serving others through the Red Cross. However, her administrative faults and need for control hindered the fledgling organization. The constant in-fighting in her later years hurt many people associated with the organization – Clara included. Still, it was “her baby” and the culmination of her life’s work.
Primary Source:
Clara Barton at Fredericksburg

Head Quarters 2nd Div.
9th Army Corps-Army of the Potomac
Camp near Falmouth, Va.
December 12th, 1862 - 2 o'clock A.M.

My dear Cousin Vira:

Five minutes time with you; and God only knows what those five minutes might be worth to the many-doomed thousands sleeping around me.

It is the night before a battle. The enemy, Fredericksburg, and its mighty entrenchments lie before us, the river between - at tomorrow's dawn our troops will assay to cross, and the guns of the enemy will sweep those frail bridges at every breath.

The moon is shining through the soft haze with a brightness almost prophetic. For the last half hour I have stood alone in the awful stillness of its glimmering light gazing upon the strange sad scene around me striving to say, "Thy will Oh God be done."

The camp fires blaze with unwanted brightness, the sentry's tread is still but quick - the acres of little shelter tents are dark and still as death, no wonder for us as I gazed sorrowfully upon them. I thought I could almost hear the slow flap of the grim messenger's wings, as one by one he sought and selected his victims for the morning. Sleep weary one, sleep and rest for tomorrow toil. Oh! Sleep and visit in dreams once more the loved ones nesting at home. They may yet live to dream of you, cold lifeless and bloody, but this dream soldier is thy last, paint it brightly, dream it well. Oh northern mothers wives and sisters, all unconscious of the hour, would to Heaven that I could bear for you the concentrated woe which is so soon to follow, would that Christ would teach my soul a prayer that would plead to the Father for grace sufficient for you, God pity and strengthen you every one.

Mine are not the only waking hours, the light yet burns brightly in our kind hearted General's tent where he pens what may be a last farewell to his wife and children and thinks sadly of his fated men.

Already the roll of the moving artillery is sounded in my ears. The battle draws near and I must catch one hour's sleep for tomorrow's labor.

Good night near cousin and Heaven grant you strength for your more peaceful and less terrible, but not less weary days than mine.

Yours in love,
Clara
"The Women Who Went to the Field"
Clara Barton

The women who went to the field, you say,
The *women* who went to the field; and pray,
What did they go for? - just to be in the way? --
They'd not know the difference betwixt work and play,
What did they know about war, anyway?
What could they do? - of what *use* could they be?
They would scream at the sight of a gun, don't you see?
Just fancy them round where the bugle notes play,
And the long roll is bidding us on to the fray.
Imagine their skirts 'mong artillery wheels,
And watch for their flutter as they flee 'cross the fields
When the charge is rammed home and the fire belches hot; -
They never will wait for the answering shot.
They would faint at the first drop of blood, in their sight.
What fun for us boys, - (ere we enter the fight;)
They might pick some lint, and tear up some sheets,
And make us some jellies, and send on their sweets,
And knit some soft socks for Uncle Sam's shoes,
And write us some letters, and tell us the news.
And thus it was settled by common consent,
That husbands, or brothers, or whoever went,
That the place for the women was in their own homes,
There to patiently wait until victory comes.
But later, it chanced, just how no one knew,
That the lines slipped a bit, and some 'gan to crowd through;
And they went, - where did they go? - Ah; where did they not?
Show us the battle, - the field, - or the spot
Where the groans of the wounded rang out on the air
That her ear caught it not, and her hand was not there,
Who wiped the death sweat from the cold, clammy brow,
And sent home the message; - "'T is well with him now"?  
Who watched in the tents, whilst the fever fires burned,
   And the pain-tossing limbs in agony turned,
   And wet the parched tongue, calmed delirium's strife
   Till the dying lips murmured, "My Mother!" "My Wife!"
   And who were they all? - They were many, my men:
   Their record was kept by no tabular pen:
   They exist in traditions from father to son.
Who recalls, in dim memory, now here and there one. -
   A few names where writ, and by chance live to-day;
   But's a perishing record fast fading away.
   Of those we recall, there are scarcely a score,
   Dix, Dame, Bickerdyke, - Edson, Harvey and Moore,
   Fales, Wittenmeyer, Gilson, Safford and Lee,
   And poor Cutter dead in the sands of the sea;
   And Frances D. Gage, our "Aunt Fanny" of old,
Whose voice rang for freedom when freedom was sold.
   And Husband, and Etheridge, and Harlan and Case,
   Livermore, Alcott, Hancock and Chase,
   And Turner, and Hawley, and Potter and Hall,
   Ah! the list grows apace, as they come at the call:
   Did these women quail at the sight of a gun?
   Will some soldier tell us of one he saw run?
Will he glance at the boats on the great western flood,
   At Pittsburg and Shiloh, did they faint at the blood?
And the brave wife of Grant stood there with them then,
   And her calm, stately presence gave strength to his men.
   And Marie of Logan; she went with them too;
   A bride, scarcely more than a sweetheart, 't is true.
Her young cheek grows pale when the bold troopers ride.
Where the "Black Eagle" soars, she is close at his side,
She staunches his blood, cools the fever-burnt breath,
And the wave of her hand stays the Angle of Death;
She nurses him back, and restores once again
To both army and state the brave leader of men.

She has smoothed his black plumes and laid them to sleep,
Whilst the angels above them their high vigils keep:
And she sits here alone, with the snow on her brow -
Your cheers for her comrades! Three cheers for her now.
And these were the women who went to the war:
The women of question; what did they go for?
Because in their hearts God had planted the seed
Of pity for woe, and help for its need;
They saw, in high purpose, a duty to do,
And the armor of right broke the barriers through.
Uninvited, unaided, unsanctioned oftentimes,
With pass, or without it, they pressed on the lines;
They pressed, they implored, till they ran the lines through,
And this was the "running" the men saw them do.
'T was a hampered work, its worth largely lost;
'T was hindrance, and pain, and effort, and cost:
But through these came knowledge, - knowledge is power.
And never again in the deadliest hour
Of war or of peace shall we be so beset
To accomplish the purpose our spirits have met.
And what would they do if war came again?
The scarlet cross floats where all was blank then.
They would bind on their "brassards" and march to the fray,
And the man liveth not who could say to them nay;
They would stand with you now, as they stood with you then,
The nurses, consolers, and saviours of men.
http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/recordView.cfm?Content=121/0301

Letter from Brevet Brigadier General William Hoffman, Commisary-General of Prisoners, to Colonel F. D. Sewall, Commander of Camp Parole, Annapolis, MD.

OFFICE COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF PRISONERS,
Washington, D. C., February 24, 1865.

Colonel F. D. SEWALL, Commanding Camp Parole, Annapolis, Md.:

COLONEL: Miss Clara Barton, who will hand this to you, desires to be the means of informing the friends of prisoners who have been in the hands of the enemy of their fate, as far as it can be learned by inquiries of those who are now arriving at Annapolis on the parole from the South. Please permit her to post notices in the barracks asking for information concerning such prisoners as she may have occasion to inquire for, and if it is practicable to give her any information from your records without interfering with the necessary course of business, I request that you will communicate such as she may desire in general term, not giving particulars on which to base a claim for pay or allowances. Report after trial of a few days how far these instructions can be carried out without inconvenience and wait for final approval.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. HOFFMAN,