

The Red Cross helpers were putting combs, bars of soap, and toothbrushes into bags. They had 20 of each item. How many bags could they fill if they put 3 combs, 3 bars of soap, and 3 toothbrushes in each bag? How many combs would be left over?

Clara Barton

Biography

- **Occupation:** Nurse
- **Born:** December 25, 1821 in North Oxford, Massachusetts
- **Died:** April 12, 1912 in Glen Echo, Maryland
- **Best known for:** Founder of the American Red Cross

Biography:



Where did Clara Barton grow up?

Clara was born Clarissa Harlowe Barton on Christmas Day in 1821 in Oxford, Massachusetts. Her father, Captain Stephen Barton, was a veteran of the Indian Wars and owned a farm. Her mother, Sarah, was a firm believer in women's rights and taught Clara that all people should be treated equally.

Clara grew up the youngest of five children. She had two older sisters, Sally and Dorothea, as well as two older brothers, Stephen and David. They taught her how to read and write while she was still young and Clara did very well in school.

Growing up on a farm Clara learned about hard work. She had lots of chores from milking the cows early in the morning to chopping wood and taking care of sick animals. She liked to ride horses as well.

Her Brother Gets Hurt

When Clara was eleven years old, her brother David fell off the roof of a barn. He became very sick. Clara spent the next two years taking care of David. The doctors didn't hold out much hope for David, but, with Clara's

help, he eventually got better. It was during this time that Clara discovered that she enjoyed taking care of others.

Working as a Teacher

At the young age of seventeen, Clara began to work as a schoolteacher teaching summer school. She had no training, but was very good at her job. Soon schools wanted to hire her to teach during the winter as well. They offered to pay her less than the men teachers were making. She said she would not do a man's work for less than a man's pay. They soon agreed to pay her the full wage.

Eventually Clara decided to get a degree in education. She went to college in New York and graduated in 1851. At first she went to work at a private school, but then decided to work on opening a free public school. She worked hard to get the school built, and by 1854 the school had six hundred students.

Fighting for Women's Rights

Clara moved to Washington D.C. and went to work for the patent office. However, as a woman she was not treated well. At one point she, and all the other women employees, were fired just because they were women. Clara worked to get her job back. She also fought for the rights of women to be treated equally in the work place. She even got [President Abraham Lincoln](#) on her side.

The Civil War Begins

Near the start of the [Civil War](#) a number of wounded soldiers arrived in Washington D.C. Clara and her sister Sally did what they could to help the men. They found out that the soldiers had little in the way of basic supplies to take care of their wounds. Clara decided to do something about this. She soon organized a way to get needed supplies to the soldiers on the front lines.

Throughout the Civil War, Clara traveled from battle to battle, doing what she could to nurse the soldiers back to health. She was brave enough to go right up to where the fighting was taking place. Many soldiers were comforted by her presence and she became known as the "Angel of the Battlefield".

Medicine During the Civil War

Medicine during the Civil War was not like it is today. Doctors didn't sterilize their medical equipment or even wash their hands before working on a patient. Conditions were so bad that nearly 60% of the deaths during the war were from disease.

The American Red Cross

While traveling overseas Clara learned of an organization called the International Red Cross. This group helped wounded soldiers during war. They hung a flag with a red cross and a white background on the outside of their hospital tents. After working for the Red Cross in France, Clara wanted to bring the organization to America.

It took a lot of hard work, but, after four years of lobbying, Clara founded the American Red Cross on May 21, 1881. Since then, the American Red Cross has helped people recover from all sorts of disasters from floods to fires to earthquakes. Today the Red Cross runs a major blood donation program that helps hospitals stay supplied with much needed blood.

Fun Facts about Clara Barton

- Clara was giving a soldier a cup of water when he suddenly died. She then noticed a hole in her sleeve from a bullet that narrowly missed her and killed the soldier.
- After the Civil War, Clara worked to track down missing soldiers. The army had kept little record of lost soldiers.
- After leaving the Red Cross in her 80s, Clara traveled the country teaching people first-aid skills.
- There are numerous elementary schools and high schools throughout the country that are named after Clara Barton.
- She never married nor had children. She said she considered the soldiers to be her family.