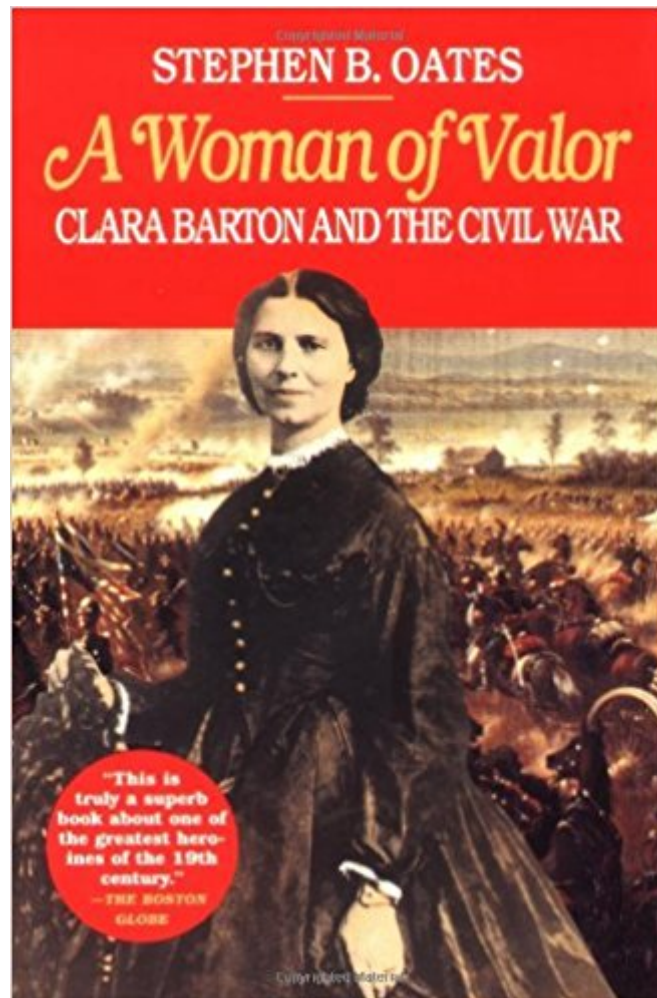




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# Woman Of Valor: Clara Barton And The Civil War



## Synopsis

When the Civil War broke out, Clara Barton wanted more than anything to be a Union soldier, an impossible dream for a thirty-nine-year-old woman, who stood a slender five feet tall. Determined to serve, she became a veritable soldier, a nurse, and a one-woman relief agency operating in the heart of the conflict. Now, award-winning author Stephen B. Oates, drawing on archival materials not used by her previous biographers, has written the first complete account of Clara Barton's active engagement in the Civil War. By the summer of 1862, with no institutional affiliation or official government appointment, but impelled by a sense of duty and a need to heal, she made her way to the front lines and the heat of battle. Oates tells the dramatic story of this woman who gave the world a new definition of courage, supplying medical relief to the wounded at some of the most famous battles of the war -- including Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Battery Wagner, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg. Under fire with only her will as a shield, she worked while ankle deep in gore, in hellish makeshift battlefield hospitals -- a bullet-riddled farmhouse, a crumbling mansion, a windblown tent. Committed to healing soldiers' spirits as well as their bodies, she served not only as nurse and relief worker, but as surrogate mother, sister, wife, or sweetheart to thousands of sick, wounded, and dying men. Her contribution to the Union was incalculable and unique. It also became the defining event in Barton's life, giving her the opportunity as a woman to reach out for a new role and to define a new profession. Nursing, regarded as a menial service before the war, became a trained, paid occupation after the conflict. Although Barton went on to become the founder and first president of the Red Cross, the accomplishment for which she is best known, *A Woman of Valor* convinces us that her experience on the killing fields of the Civil War was her most extraordinary achievement.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Prolific biographer Oates ( *Abraham Lincoln* ) uses both primary and secondary sources in addressing the Civil War career of Clara Barton (1821-1912). He interprets her work as an act of self-discovery and part of a larger trend in which American women were finding a new sense of their collective worth. An "angel of the battlefield" who succored the wounded while under fire, Barton also raised funds and supplies through a network of women's support groups, while challenging the conventional belief that nursing was inappropriate for respectable women. Overcoming her initial inhibitions and demonstrating that women were more broadly capable than had been accepted, Barton, who founded the American Red Cross, opened the door for women in professions and politics during the second half of the 19th century. Oates here makes a useful contribution to women's history and Civil War studies. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Before her name became synonymous with the Red Cross, Barton organized drives at the outbreak of the Civil War for badly needed supplies for an army that had almost no idea of the carnage that lay ahead. At the urging of her father, she cast off her qualms about being the only "lady" near so many soldiers and worked on the battlefield to try and save literally fields full of wounded men. By the end of the war she was an honored and loved veteran and a feminist. Although this work brings to light Barton's affair with a married officer, it is not a salacious or even vaguely sensational biography. Like Oates's previous biographies of Lincoln ( *Abraham Lincoln* , LJ 3/15/84) and John Brown ( *To Purge This Land with Blood* , Univ. of Mass., 1984), this is a carefully written and researched work that brings to life both the Civil War and a period of Barton's life that was to affect her forever. Since this is the first biography to do so in any depth, it deserves consideration by most libraries.- Katherine Gillen, Mesa P.L., Ariz.Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I am still in the process of reading this book with my daughter for a book report. The author has taken information from real people and directly from Miss Clara Barton's own diaries. It makes for a very interesting story. The reader is guided through the story and all the information about where she is and what is happening is very real. Descriptions abound throughout and the storyteller leaves

the reader wanting more. I would say, the only downside is probably that the book is divided into only parts and not chapters. I had to divide the book myself so that we could digest the story in small doses for discussion. One other thing that I did not realize, Miss Barton lead a very storied life and some rather graphics details were included that we did not find tasteful or useful for the report and were therefore omitted from our reading. This, by-the-way was not any of the gory battle scenes, but her love life. On the whole, I have enjoyed the biography thus far and would recommend it for more mature audiences to read.

I used this as a major reference, supported by other works, to write a Chautauqua-style first person script of Clara Barton. I found it useful for my purpose. The narrative of the battles and impoverished medical plans were accurately problematic for the Union at the time of the Civil War. If the objective is to understand Clara's unique role in the Civil War this is a good reference. To understand the battles, it is necessary to review Ken Burns, Civil War documentary along with the book. Clara Barton was insecure individual, unwanted by her mother, and her only memory of a childhood was one of fear - fear of being seen and noticed. Compensating for that developmental problem, she developed an obsession for being needed. Complicated by depression, she ran a single track of frenetic control and needing respect with approval throughout her life.

History with gusto! This was an excellent book. I learned so much about the Civil War and some of the important battles as well as about Andersonville. Clara Barton cared for and honored our brave soldiers, north or south, white or black.

I purchased this book for research I am doing on nursing during the Civil War. I have only read parts of it, but it seems to be a good resource.

Offers a comprehensive account of Clara Barton's work during the Civil War. Her tale of unselfishness, sacrifice, valor and patriotism should be compulsory study for school children.

An in depth picture of how women became engaged in Civil War. She changed the Army by introducing some basic humanitarian efforts medical treatment. It tells history of the early Civil War days, before country was ready.

An excellent narrative history of Ms. Barton's Civil War experiences. My only reservation is that

Oates never discusses why Clara did not seem able to work with other women like Dorothea Dix who were engaged in nursing the wounded and providing supplies just as she was doing.

First definitive bio I've read. Learned so much about the state of medicine during CW, the horror of wounds and the battlefield, and the important contributions CB made to women's progress towards equality. Very good read too.

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