

Before They Were Famous

Clara Barton



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Teaching Moments

Clara Barton took a deep breath.

She was seventeen years old and standing in front of a classroom of forty students. They ranged in age from four to thirteen.

Clara was their teacher. And this was the first day of school in Oxford, Massachusetts.





MERRY
CHRISTMAS



Fun Facts

Clara was born on Christmas Day, 1821, but in Massachusetts, where Clara was born, it wasn't a big holiday at the time.



As a little girl, Clara had been very shy. But she liked to help people, and she had gradually overcome her shy feelings.

H O M E



Fun Facts

Clara's father Stephen built the family house as well as most of the furniture in it.

Some of her **confidence** came from growing up on a farm. She knew how to milk cows and ride a horse. And her brother David had **insisted** that she learn how to throw a ball well and tie knots that would stay tight.



Clara liked helping people. When she was eleven, David had taken a hard fall while helping to build a barn. It was going to take him a long time to heal. Clara kept him company. She learned from the doctor how to give David his medicines. She even applied slimy leeches to his skin.

It was thought that they could draw the bad blood out from a sick person's body.



Leech

Fun Facts

Clara had a white-haired dog named Button that was her best friend when she was little.



For the next two years, until David recovered, she almost never left his side.



Moving On

There was just one problem. In 1853, the idea of a woman being in charge of a large school was unthinkable. So even though Clara had created the school and **fostered** its growth, a male principal was put in charge.



Fun Facts

In 1874, Phebe Sudlow of Davenport, Iowa, became the first female superintendent of public schools in the United States.





Had the new principal been capable and friendly, Clara might have made the best of it. But the new principal was jealous of her **reputation**. He made Clara's working day so unpleasant that her health suffered. Reluctantly, she realized that the new school, her school, was going to have to get by without her.