

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 25 1979

DATE ENTERED

approved 1/3/80

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Clara Barton National Historic Site

AND/OR COMMON

Clara Barton House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 5801 Oxford Road

CITY, TOWN

Glen Echo

VICINITY OF

8th

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY CODE

24

COUNTY

Montgomery

CODE

031

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☒ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☒ MUSEUM☒ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, National Capital Region

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C. 20242

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville,

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1964

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The basic elements of the house are those of the Locust Street Red Cross Hotel erected early in July 1889 as emergency housing in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, for those made homeless by the May 31st flood disaster there. Prefabricated in the Midwest for rapid construction at Johnstown, it was later easily disassembled and shipped by rail to Washington, D.C., where it was stacked on lots owned by the Red Cross.

A 16-foot-wide hall 3 stories high and lighted by clerestory windows provided a common and dining space. The flanking 2-story portions were also 16 feet wide and were divided by board and batten partitions into family bedrooms opening to the central hall on the first floor and to continuous balconies on the second floor. The entire structure was of wood without ornament and roughly finished.

Shortened by several bays but using much of the same material, a similar Red Cross structure was erected at Glen Echo in the summer of 1891 adjacent to the National Chautauqua, also under construction. Intended to relate to the stone architecture of the chautauqua was a stone facade with its parapet curved to conceal the high roof of the central bay. It was ornamented by a large red cross of brick above a central entrance door.

If this building was intended then as a Red Cross headquarters, such plans were thwarted by inadequate transportation and communication and by the failure of the chautauqua in its second season due to a malarial scare. Until 1897 the structure was used only for storage of disaster relief supplies and for occasional "camping out" by the Red Cross staff.

By 1897 Glen Echo was served by a new post office, telephone lines, and a trolley. Clara Barton's diaries for that year record her supervision of remodeling to adapt the house as national headquarters of the American Red Cross. The stone facade which darkened the interior was removed except for its ends which became corner towers with the addition of metal-roofed turrets. Contemporary photos show a railed porch across the front, unroofed except where it sheltered the entrance. Clara Barton's preferred exterior colors of light yellow with white trim were restored in a repainting in 1978.

Some interior improvements were documented photographically for official Red Cross publicity. They include a parlor in the front room to the left of an entrance vestibule, a railed lightwell toward the rear of the central hall, and a 3-room office suite across the rear of the first floor. Entered through a pair of doors with stained glass Red Cross panels, this suite included a dining room and 2 offices. The original kitchen is largely intact adjacent to the dining room.

Written documentation identifies the second floor bedrooms across the rear as those of Clara Barton, George Pullman, and Dr. Julian Hubbell. In the airy, many-windowed manner of most of the house these rooms were connected with triple-doored openings. The bath adjacent to Dr. Hubbell's bedroom existed in the historic period but none of the original fixtures has survived.

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Storage of relief supplies, stationery, and publications was important in the administration of the Red Cross. It justifies the large number of closets and explains the use of the first floor rooms behind the front stair. In the front corner to the right of the entrance is a masonry vault on both the first and second stories with a fruit cellar at the basement level.

At the third floor the three rooms that break above the clerestory retain a high level of historic integrity. A pair of windows in the front room have red panes forming red crosses. The rear room has a door opening to the roof where once there was a railed bench with a view toward the Potomac. The center, topmost room bridges the lightwell several feet above the front and back rooms and is separated from them by sections of clerestory beneath which is a band of colored glass panels.

Interior wall and ceiling finishes are primarily light stained wood, plaster, tacked muslin, or wallpaper canvas painted in some rooms and papered in others. Some of the bedroom closet doors are striped ticking over wood frames. Except for the towers the exterior is wood clapboard with standing seam metal roofs. Original floors are softwood wide boards.

In the years after Clara Barton's death Dr. Hubbell replaced the open front porch with a columned, covered one-story porch. His twin nieces who inherited the house in 1929 modified the interior to create rent-producing apartments. Baths and kitchens were added. Some floors were covered with narrow hardwood flooring. Central heating replaced stoves. A garage with screened porches above was attached at the western rear corner. A new basement apartment was created at the rear. An exterior entrance porch and stair were added adjacent to the original kitchen.

The most severe change in the grounds has been the encroachment of the Glen Echo parking lot at the front. This explains why only a fraction of the 8.59-acre national historic site has sufficient integrity to be included in the National Register. Of the original outbuildings, which included a stable and chicken house, none remain. Documentation, both photographic and written, provides a basis for some grounds restoration with authentic plant varieties.

Included within the Clara Barton National Historic Site is a collection of approximately 2000 items dating primarily from 1890 to 1912 but also including earlier 19th century artifacts. The bulk of the collection is late Victorian furniture roughly half of which belonged to Clara Barton. The collection also contains her clothing, books, personal manuscripts, memorabilia, drawings, flags, souvenirs, and one volume of her diary. There are also Red Cross manuscripts and organizational records, miscellaneous photographs, household items, and scrapbooks and ledgers relating to her efforts to locate missing men after the Civil War. All items original to or historically associated with Clara Barton and the house during her occupancy are considered to be included in this documentation for the National Register.

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A continuing restoration is underway at the Clara Barton House. Its first objective is structural stabilization and reinforcement to keep the building weathertight and safe for increasingly heavy visitation. This work is either concealed or replacement in kind. An equally important long-range objective is the return of the major interior spaces, the exterior, and the grounds to their known appearance in the 1897-1904 period. To date this has included the restoration of Clara Barton's bedroom and the movement of the vestibule wall to its historic location. Restoration of the Red Cross office suite at the rear of the first floor is currently underway. As mentioned above, the exterior has been returned to its turn-of-the-century colors. Drawings have been prepared for replacing the present porch with the design of 1897.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☒ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1897-1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The property is significant as the home of Clara Barton from 1897 to 1912, with special emphasis on the years 1897-1904 when it was also executive headquarters of the American Red Cross. Miss Barton's personal direction of its 1897 remodeling made the house uniquely hers in design as well as occupancy.

Clara Barton had many careers, any one of which would have made her an important figure in American history. Born in 1821 in Oxford, Massachusetts, she first distinguished herself as the organizer of a public school in Bordentown, New Jersey, which was so successful that she was replaced by a male principal. Pursuing equal opportunity for women, she was among the first of her sex to be appointed to a Federal civil service job as a clerk in the Patent Office in Washington. During the Civil War she distinguished herself by organizing medical and nutritional units to relieve battlefield suffering. After the war a missing persons bureau that she directed was able to reunite families with related veterans or to inform them how sons, brothers, or husbands had perished and where they were buried.

Perhaps the crowning achievements of her career were the organization and direction of the American Red Cross, its affiliation with the International Red Cross, and her successful persuasion, here and abroad, to extend Red Cross relief to civilian disasters as well as wartime suffering. Related to these was her effort to have the United States sign the Geneva Treaty, accomplished in 1882. Miss Barton was president of the American Red Cross for 23 years, resigning in 1904 at the age of 82.

In the period of her association with this property, she was appointed by President McKinley to represent the United States at the International Red Cross Conference in Vienna in September 1897, interrupting her remodeling of the house. She directed battle relief in Cuba during the Spanish-American War as well as relief to sufferers in Cuban concentration camps. Her last field work was in hurricane-ravaged Galveston, Texas, in 1900. She headed the U.S. delegation to the International Conference of the Red Cross in St. Petersburg in 1902.

After her retirement as president of the Red Cross Clara Barton kept the Glen Echo house as her residence until her death there in 1912. A comparison of the Glen Echo headquarters with the marble edifice built by the Red Cross in Washington in 1915-16 dramatizes the personal, domestic style of Miss Barton's leadership. One cannot imagine her successors keeping a cow, horse, goat, or chickens; growing and preserving asparagus, corn, currants, and plums; or personally laundering the curtains of the present headquarters.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Clara Barton. Unpublished diaries. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

William E. Barton. The Life of Clara Barton, Founder of the American Red Cross.
Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1922.

Percy H. Epler. The Life of Clara Barton. New York: Macmillan, 1915.

Photographs. Photographic Division, Library of Congress.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 314520 43115090
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning where the centerline of Oxford Road extended intersects the George Washington Memorial Parkway property line, the boundary runs southeasterly along said line to the ravine of Minnehaha Creek, thence northeasterly along said ravine to the cut separating the front lawn from the Glen Echo-Clara Barton parking lot, thence northwesterly along said cut to the centerline of Oxford Road extended, thence southwesterly along said centerline to the point of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Paul Goeldner, Regional Historical Architect

4/79

ORGANIZATION

National Capital Region, National Park Service

DATE

426-6660

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20242

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

Property already on Register. This form constitutes documentation only.
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is X National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Asst. Dir., Cultural Resources

DATE

10/16/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Regional Coordinator

DATE

1-3-80

DATE

1/2/80

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The significance of the Clara Barton National Historic Site which qualifies it for listing in the National Register is its association with Clara Barton and the Red Cross, especially in the years 1897-1904. Architecturally, these associated values are best defined by photographic and written documents of the period and by the survival, sometimes concealed by later finishes, of much of the environment described by the documents. Areas such as the basement and the front apartment on the second floor are minimally described by the documents and have undergone irreversible modification since Miss Barton's death in 1912. They are or will be adaptively used for those modern support functions required to administer and maintain the house as a museum. Similarly, first and second floor rooms on the long sides of the house and opening to the light well will continue in non-historic uses with minimal architectural change; the documentary record for these spaces is too meager to support accurate restoration.