



A Quiet Leader

Dr. Julian B. Hubbell, the first
American Red Cross Chief Field Agent



As Clara Barton described the qualities of the ideal American Red Cross field agent, she said: “The ideal field agent should possess: the ability to view a situation broadly without scorning details, an objective mind mellowed by sympathetic understanding, a liking for hard work, willingness to cooperate with others, belief in what the Red Cross stands for, executive talents, but willingness to subordinate his/herself.”

A Life of Service

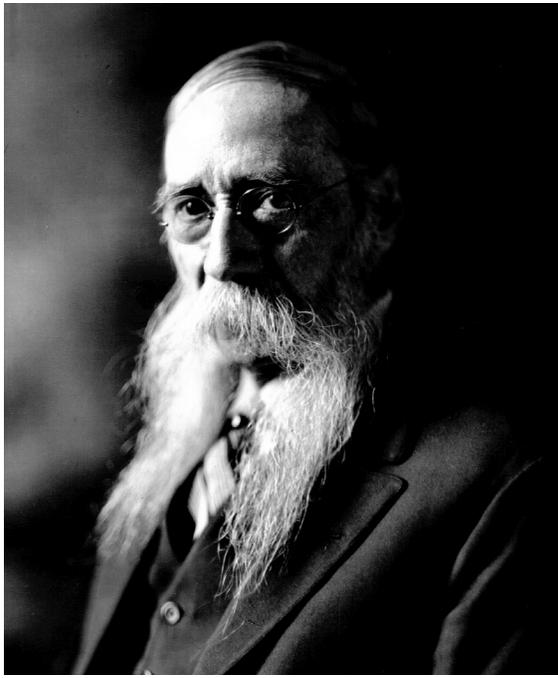
The qualities Clara Barton saw as ideal define the characteristics of her long time assistant and co-worker Dr. Julian Hubbell, the first American Red Cross chief field agent. She absolutely trusted his abilities and relied upon his dedication to the organization.

In the field, he conducted initial inspections, directed distribution of supplies, and organized the influx of additional relief workers. Dr. Hubbell directed the day-to-day relief operations and was often in complete charge of the field work.

He served the American Red Cross from its inception in 1881 until his resignation in 1904. He was involved in every relief effort during the organization’s first 23 years except one. Yet, his contributions to the American Red Cross are often overshadowed by Clara Barton. This is partly due to the fact that Miss Barton preferred to conduct American Red Cross efforts directly in the field. If Miss Barton was unable to travel directly into a stricken area, Dr. Hubbell was

sent in her place. If she was called away from the field, Dr. Hubbell remained in charge. His field work included: 1884 Mississippi and Ohio River floods; 1885 Texas famine; 1886 Charleston, South Carolina earthquake; 1888 Mount Vernon, Illinois cyclone; 1888 Florida Yellow Fever Epidemic; 1889 Johnstown, Pennsylvania Flood; 1892 Russian famine; 1892 Pomeroy, Iowa cyclone; 1893-94 Sea Islands, South Carolina hurricane relief; 1896 Armenian and Turkish famine; 1898 Cuban Reconcentrado relief; 1898 Spanish-American War; 1899 Cuban civilian post-war recovery; and 1903-04 Butler, Pennsylvania Typhoid Fever Epidemic. Dr. Hubbell represented the American Red Cross at International Conferences of the Red Cross on three occasions.

As Clara Barton built the foundations for the American Red Cross, Dr. Hubbell was an unwavering supporter, a valuable partner in the organization, and an indispensable member of her staff.



Dr. Hubbell's dedication to Clara Barton and the American Red Cross began before the organization was even formed. Originally from Iowa, Julian Bertine Hubbell was born February 5, 1847, in Sabula and later moved with his family to Anamosa. As a young man he learned about Clara Barton from his mother. He read of Miss Barton's Civil War accomplishments and later admitted to her that he had "chosen" her to "be his heroine." In the mid 1870s, he moved to Dansville, New York, and served as a professor of science and later principal at the Dansville, New York Hygienic Seminary. It was during this time that he met Miss Barton, learned of her quest to form a Red Cross Society in America, and pledged his service to her cause.

Miss Barton's reliance on Dr. Hubbell began with the organization's very first relief effort. In 1881, Julian Hubbell was attending the University of Michigan. At Miss Barton's request, he was studying medicine when news of devastating forest fires in Michigan reached Miss Barton in Dansville, New York. Miss Barton diverted Julian Hubbell from his studies, and he reported to the "burnt district." The following was reported in *The Red Cross in Peace and War*, "...Professor J. B. Hubbell, was on the burnt fields of Michigan with instructions to examine into the condition of the people and report their necessities to the society from actual observation. These duties were faithfully and judiciously performed..."

Julian Hubbell returned to his schooling but was called away again during the 1882 flooding of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. During his six weeks in the field, Red Cross chapters were organized in New Orleans, Vicksburg, Natchez, and Memphis. Miss Barton summarized Julian Hubbell's accomplishments as "...quick, short, sharp work and yet the most brilliant and successful field work the Red Cross has approved. We are constantly gaining, both in usefulness and appreciation." He returned to the field for the Ohio River floods in the spring of 1883. During this effort, Red Cross chapters were organized in Louisville, Cincinnati,

and St. Louis. Miss Barton wrote, "Again our field agent was dispatched and did excellent work. The entire country was aroused and so liberal were the contributions to the various committees of relief that when Dr. Hubbell retired from the field, having completed the work, he had still unexplained funds in hand. But they were soon needed. In less than a month occurred the fearful cyclone of Louisiana and Mississippi. . ." Julian Hubbell assisted with the cyclone relief in May and following his return to Michigan, he received his degree as a doctor of medicine on June 28 1883.

During the 1892 Russian famine Miss Barton remained in America coordinating donations and shipments of supplies. Dr. Hubbell was sent from the International Conference of the Red Cross in Rome to Riga, Russia where he met the relief ship S.S. Tynehead. Dr. Hubbell organized the distribution of supplies and arranged transportation throughout the stricken areas by railcars and caravans. He traveled deep into remote regions by river. He coordinated the efforts of the American Red Cross with the Russian Red Cross and worked with Count Leo Tolstoi. Under Dr. Hubbell's direction, American aid, which amounted to 117,000 bushels of shelled corn, 11,033 bags of flour and meal, and additional amounts of wheat, rye, bacon, canned goods and medicine reached famine affected regions over a distance of 3,000 miles from the port at Riga. Clara Barton sent American aid to Russia, but it was Dr. Hubbell who distributed the aid to the Russian people.

Dr. Hubbell's service as an American Red Cross field agent began without formal procedure or ceremony. He dutifully put aside his affairs to answer the call of Clara Barton and the American Red Cross. Through his actions he defined the role of an American Red Cross field agent. Dr. Hubbell was so steadfastly loyal to Clara Barton that when she resigned from the American Red Cross in 1904 he resigned too. He continued to assist with her later work and stayed by her side until her death in 1912. After Miss Barton's death, he was committed to perpetuating the memory of her accomplishments and preserving the mementos of her life without calling attention to his own achievements. Julian Hubbell passed away in the Glen Echo home on November 19, 1929. An associate wrote of him: "Next to the great Clara Barton his record of achievements entitles him to a full measure of praise and honor and a long bright page in history and a secure niche in the Halls of Fame."