

French Convert Aided Red Cross Founder

By THOMAS E. KISSLING

Washington — (NC) — Just 100 years ago this month Clara Barton, of Red Cross fame, began her Civil War welfare assistance to servicemen, veterans and their families.

Later, she organized the American Red Cross and served as its first president, 1881-1902. One of her earliest companions and volunteers in the work was Antoinette Margot, Huguenot convert to Catholicism.

On April 20, 1861, Miss Barton, then 40 years old, left her job at the United States Patent Office to visit the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, bivouacked in the unfinished U.S. Senate chamber in Washington. These troops were among the first to respond to President Lincoln's initial call for volunteers.

THE REGIMENT had suffered casualties when attacked by Southern sympathizers on its way south through Baltimore.

With her own funds she bought food and medicines for these men from her home state, and later when they moved into Virginia she collected and distributed relief supplies to them.

During many of the campaigns she tended the wounded on battlefields and helped surgeons set up emergency medical stations, wrote letters for them and at the end of the war was engaged in tracing missing soldiers.

In August, 1869, on her doctor's advice she went to Switzerland for a complete rest.

There Miss Barton was impressed by the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which at that time had been subscribed to by 22 nations and the Papal States. Her own nation was not among them and she worked tirelessly during the next 12 years to gain acceptance of the Geneva Treaty by the United States government.

While Miss Barton was recuperating in Berne during the summer of 1870, the Franco-Prussian war broke out. A band of workers from the national Red Cross Committee in Geneva visited her enroute to the seat of war and invited her to join them. She did a little later.

Hearing of her presence and her past experience, Louise, the Grand Duchess of Baden, invited her to come to Strasbourg, then under siege.

Miss Barton went from Berne to Basle. It was there she met Mlle. Antoinette Margot, who also was enroute to the front to serve as a volunteer nurse. The second child of Francois Margot and Adele Gauthier, of Geneva, Henriette Antoinette Margot was born on June 2, 1843, raised in the city of Lyons, France, and reared in strict observance of the Protestant faith.

As a young woman she won recognition as an artist, and gained fame with her painting (1869) of Charlotte Corday, French heroine. Speaking about their first meeting, Miss Barton relates:

"There came to me at this moment a kind-hearted, gentle-toned, intelligent Swiss girl, who had left the art studies to go alone to care for the wounded. The Society introduced her to me. Swiss by birth, French by cultivation, education and habit — the two national characteristics met and joined in her.

"No matter, as both were unquenchable, unconquerable. Fair-haired, playful, bright and confident. . . there was something in that face to be drawn to 'at sight' and to her astonishment and delight I told her I might accompany me (to the front).

"This slender little lady went with me every step of the way, over broken ranks, through fire and blood, and both came out alive. God knows how and now (1885), she has left her beloved France to come and be with me (in the United States)."

During the 14 years following the Franco-Prussian war experience, Clara and Antoinette corresponded frequently. During this period, Miss Margot went through a period of un- happy religious doubt.

A chance mention of the name of the Cure of Ars, St. John Vianney, reminded her of a miracle of healing performed at his tomb that had come to her personal attention when she was a young woman. Her conversion to Catholicism soon followed, on October 14, 1873.

Her subsequent life took on "a heavenly beauty and impressive simplicity," according to her biographer and spiritual advisor, Father Thomas D. Williams, of Baltimore and Washington.

Miss Margot wrote to "Dear dear Miss Barton: Never, never shall I forget what I owe to you. I owe even my perfect actual happiness of being a Catholic, for without your strong teaching, and your nursing of my heart, I could never have dared to take the step of following my convictions, when I had 'convictions to follow.'"

Before coming to America, at Miss Barton's invitation, Miss Margot renounced the world and became a nun in October, 1874, despite parental sorrow and objections. However, after three years, ill health forced her to leave the convent. The summer of 1884 she acted as companion and interpreter for Miss Barton at the International Conference of the Red Cross in Geneva.

In September, 1885, she arrived at Dansville, in the western part of New York State, living with Clara Barton there for ten years, thence moving to Washington, where both were closely associated again for another two years.

In 1887, Miss Margot left the home of Miss Barton, whom she had hoped to convert to Catholicism, and rented rooms elsewhere in Washington, seeking pupils to tutor in art and French.

She soon met Leonide Dela-rue, a pioneer worker with Miss Mary Merrick in founding the Christ Child Society. The two women purchased land and built a frame, 35-room house in Swiss chalet style, in Brook- land, on the outskirts of Wash- ington.

New Church Building Shows Dip

Washington — (RNS)—New church construction during the first quarter of 1961 totaled \$233,000,000, a decline of one percent from the \$235,000,000 recorded in the same period last year, the Census Bureau estimated here.

March construction of \$74,000,000 was \$1,000,000 less than in 1960.

An unusually severe winter has retarded all private construction to a slight degree and prospects are still bright that church construction will again top one billion dollars this year and perhaps exceed 1960's record.

Building activity by the non-public schools and colleges is picking up and totaled \$6,000,000 in March, compared with \$43,000,000 a year ago, the report said. First quarter construction in this category is estimated at \$142,000,000, an increase of \$9,000,000 over the same period of a year ago.

Private hospital and institutional construction during the first quarter held steady, totaling an estimated \$136,000,000, the same as for the first quarter of 1960.

Completed in 1891, they called it Theodoron, and furnished a chapel on the first floor. This was the beginning of St. Anthony's parish, with only 12 families.

Here Miss Margot befriended the Very Rev. Henry Hyernut, professor of Biblical Archaeology and Semitic Languages at nearby Catholic University of America, and both women aided him financially in establishing his Institute of Oriental Research and Literature.

The church, completed in 1896 on land donated by Miss Margot, was named by Cardinal Gibbons "St. Anthony," the masculine form of Antoinette's name. In November, 1910, Miss Margot visited her old home in France and went to Rome where she had a memorable audience with Pope St. Pius X.

Returning to the parish she helped to found, Miss Margot took up residence in Villa Marie, where she died on December 28, 1925.



No 'Missal Gap' Here

Middleburg, Va. — There's no Community Center after Sunday morning "missal gap" in Middle-day Mass.

burg, thanks to gift subscriptions for the new Altar & Home Pocket Missal sent to President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy by the missal's publisher.

EVIDENCE THAT the Kennedys are making good use of the combined monthly missal and magazine is seen in this photo, showing Mrs. Kennedy holding a well thumbed copy of Pocket Missal as she and the President leave the Middleburg

after Sun- ing a warm note of thanks from the White House for the gift subscriptions.

Dennis Howard, who publishes the missal in Hackensack, N.J., explained: "The Kennedys were sent subscriptions when we heard that parishioners in Missouri, Pocket Missal is distributed especially for lay participation at Mass and as a means of increasing lay understanding of the liturgy. Each Sunday features all the Masses for the week and Holy days in each month as well as an editorial section devoted to Scriptural liturgy, and lay spirituality.

Middleburg were requested to leave the copies of Pocket Missal in the pews because they were needed for use on following Sundays. Since we're forthrightly against 'missal gaps' in Middleburg or Washington, we sent gift subscriptions."

Howard also reported receiv-

Peace Corps, Churches To Be Linked

Washington — (RNS) — A guide was issued by the Peace Corps here outlining how it will cooperate with church-related agencies in helping the free world's needy peoples.

Prepared by Gordon Boyce, Peace Corps director of private agency relations, the document was distributed to all private agencies with programs designed to assist underdeveloped nations.

Those religiously affiliated include Church World Service of the National Council of Churches, Catholic Relief Services — National Catholic Welfare Conference, American Friends Service Committee, Lutheran World Relief, and many other denominational groups.

Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr., corps director, who approved the guide, noted that the new governmental organization "wants to help, not replace, private agencies which are doing an excellent job in this field."

"The Peace Corps has taken the position from the outset that its activities must encourage private initiative in the field of international education and assistance to foreign nations," he said. "At the same time the Peace Corps wants to learn from the experience of private agencies and to make use of the techniques they have developed over several generations of international service."

Pope Names Archbishop

Vatican City — (NC) — Pope John XXIII has raised the Ethiopian Rite Apostolic Exarchate of Addis Ababa to the rank of an archdiocese.

He has appointed Bishop A. Mariam Yemmeru to be first archbishop of the See. About 43,000 Catholics belong to the Ethiopian Rite.

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