

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910457471803321
Autore	Pryor Elizabeth Brown
Titolo	Clara Barton [[electronic resource] ] : professional angel // Elizabeth Brown Pryor
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia [Pa.], : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987
ISBN	0-8122-0090-X
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (475 p.)
Collana	Studies in Health, Illness, and Caregiving
Disciplina	361.7/634/0924 B
Soggetti	Nurses - United States Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Second paperback printing 1990.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Clara Barton. Professional Angel -- One -- Two -- Three -- Four -- Five -- Six -- Seven -- Eight -- Nine -- Ten -- Eleven -- Twelve -- Thirteen -- Fourteen -- Fifteen -- Sixteen -- Seventeen -- Eighteen -- Abbreviations -- Notes -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Widely known today as the "Angel of the Battlefield," Clara Barton's personal life has always been shrouded in mystery. In Clara Barton, Professional Angel, Elizabeth Brown Pryor presents a biography of Barton that strips away the heroic exterior and reveals a complex and often trying woman. Based on the papers Clara Barton carefully saved over her lifetime, this biography is the first one to draw on these recorded thoughts. Besides her own voluminous correspondence, it reflects the letters and reminiscences of lovers, a grandniece who probed her aunt's venerable facade, and doctors who treated her nervous disorders. She emerges as a vividly human figure. Continually struggling to cope with her insecure family background and a society that offered much less than she had to give, she chose achievement as the vehicle for gaining the love and recognition that frequently eluded her during her long life. Not always altruistic, her accomplishments were nonetheless extraordinary. On the battlefields of the Civil War, in securing American participation in the International Red Cross, in promoting peacetime disaster relief, and in fighting for women's rights,

Clara Barton made an unparalleled contribution to American social progress. Yet the true measure of her life must be made from this perspective: she dared to offend a society whose acceptance she treasured, and she put all of her energy into patching up the lives of those around her when her own was rent and frayed.

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