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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN RED CROSS

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF
BUILDING

Cornerstone Laid - - - - - March 27, 1915

First Occupied - - - - - February 3, 1917

Dedicatory Exercises - - - - - May 12, 1917

Church Annex, later designated as Annex No. 2—

First occupied - - - February, 1916

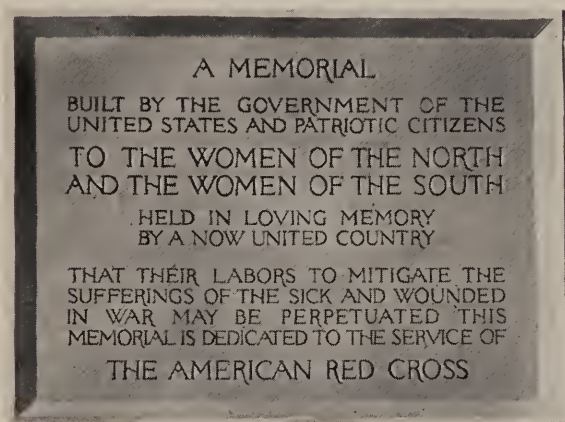
Annex No. 1—First occupied - - - June 10, 1917

Annex No. 3—First occupied - - - April 10, 1918

Annex No. 4—First occupied - - September 12, 1918

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS



AMERICAN RED CROSS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AMERICAN RED CROSS

OCCUPYING the square between the Corcoran Gallery of Art and Memorial Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution in the National Capital is an impressive marble building, dedicated to "Mercy" in the name of the women of the Civil War and used as Headquarters by the American Red Cross.

Whether against the hot blue skies of August or the gray ones of November, this three-storied white temple, with its stately Corinthian columns, is a pleasing picture to the eyes of those who pass along the generous boulevard that runs before the door, or walk toward it across the green-sward of the park opposite. Its marble, that stands in bold relief against the dark, graceful elms, was taken from the hills of Vermont, the product of the Proctor quarries, and it looks like a bit of old Greece that has kindly stepped down into our day, simple in line, quiet and stately in aspect, with a dignity and beauty that make it a fitting setting for the work to which it has been consecrated. From opposite eaves hang two significant ensigns, Old Glory and the Red Cross flag.

But let us walk around the arc of its graveled driveway, that lies ~~as a butlibrool.com.cn~~ between the green hedgerows, and approach the wide inviting entrance. We are more deeply impressed with the beauty and graceful dignity of the building at each advancing step; its atmosphere seems to envelop us like a great cloak and we feel that we are coming close to something big and generous and kindly. Its continuous whiteness in which blue shadows lurk is not cold, nor monotonous. There is a homelike spirit that bids us welcome and we lift our eyes and read, above the portico, carved there in the eternal stone:

"IN MEMORY OF THE HEROIC WOMEN OF THE CIVIL WAR"

Thoughtfully, we pass on into the building.

Again the marble, and dark, practical-looking wood fittings—a long counter arrangement behind which stand attentive women in the service of the Division of Public Information and Reception, "watching the world go by," so they say—and people passing in all directions, busy workers and interested visitors, threading the long hall, ascending and descending the broad central stairway rising in the background.

We are agreed that the Red Cross should have a fitting abode, a beautiful place that could be called home, that would stand as a monument symbolizing in its strength and beauty the fine qualities that have made the Red Cross endure, and preserving its history and records in its archives. As we pause there in the great hall, knowing that we stand beneath the hospitable roof of the American Red Cross,



STAIRWAY

which for the moment is our gracious host, we feel that no place could more amply fill the role than this. It is the perfect realization of the ideal of what such a “home” should be. It is set in the heart of Washington’s great garden, opposite the broad, green sweep of the Mall with its arching elms. Through the doors, that are of bronze and glass, we can see the White House, and in the other direction the Washington Monument that seems to touch the clouds.

HOW did it happen, you ask? What is the history of this Red Cross building that stands like a jewel in the long strand of lovely buildings that threads the capital city?



LEFT PANEL OF THREE MEMORIAL WINDOWS

It is a pretty story, a romantic story that dates from the Civil War. It tells how the idea was born in the mind of a Union soldier, inspired by the tireless work of his own wife and other women of the country in behalf of the soldiers, and how thereby a "castle in the air" was transformed into a castle of marble."

FRANCIS BARLOW AND JAMES SCRYMSER

In April, 1861, when President Lincoln issued his call for 75,000 volunteers, two young men, Francis Barlow and James Scrymser, enlisted in the Engineer Corps of the Twelfth New York Regiment. At Antietam, Sergeant Barlow was badly wounded. His wife, a member of the Sanitary Commission, went even to the battle line that she might be at his side to nurse him. At Gettysburg, Francis Barlow was again wounded and this time left behind the Confederate lines. The fearless and faithful wife endeavored to reach him, appealing in vain for permission to cross the enemy lines. At daybreak one morning, in spite of the watchful sentries, she succeeded in reaching her wounded husband and insisted upon remaining with him until he recovered. A third time the dauntless soldier was wounded, and a third time, upon this occasion in a Washington hospital, Mrs. Barlow nursed him back to life.

This brave woman died in 1864, a victim of typhus, contracted in her untiring labors among the suffering fighters. To the bereaved husband she typified the splendid spirit of women in war time and shortly before his death in 1896, Major General Barlow predicted, in the presence of his old

comrade-in-arms, Captain Scrymser, that some day a grateful nation would erect a splendid monument to the memory of the heroic women of the Civil War. Captain Scrymser promised that he would do all in his power to bring his old friend's prophesy to fruition.

However, it was not until 1911 that Captain Scrymser was able to take any definite steps in the matter. The proposition was placed before the New York Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, which enthusiastically endorsed the idea and pledged its full support. It was the suggestion of Captain Scrymser that the proposed building be given over to the occupancy of the Red Cross.

During the administration of President Taft (1912), a bill was introduced in Congress to appropriate \$400,000 for a building and site provided that not less than \$300,000 more were contributed. Among the most ardent workers for the passage of the bill was Miss Mabel T. Boardman, at the time executive head of the Red Cross, and indeed more than one phase of the building's success is due to her indefatigable efforts. Miss Boardman appeared in person before the subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriation of the United States Senate to argue its case. This bill passed the Senate but was lost in conference. The final bill was passed in October, 1913, and was signed by President Wilson.

It provided for a building monumental in design and character, to cost not less than \$700,000, to be used as the permanent headquarters of the American Red Cross, and made provision for the payment of a part contribution, amounting to \$400,000, for the acquisition of a site and

erection thereon of a memorial, on condition that the remainder be raised by private contribution.

Contributions to the amount of \$400,000 were received by the Red Cross in the following amounts:

Captain James A. Scrymser.....	\$100,000
Mrs. Russell Sage.....	150,000
Mrs. E. H. Harriman.....	50,000
The Rockefeller Foundation.....	100,000

These amounts were secured before the laying of the cornerstone, which took place with appropriate ceremony on March 27, 1915.

Messrs. Breck Trowbridge & Goodhue Livingston of New York City were chosen as the architects and the contract was awarded to the Boyle-Robertson Construction Co., Inc., of Washington.

THE SITE—AN ENTIRE CITY BLOCK

Fortunately, the desired land, which at the time was occupied by a number of small buildings and a lumber yard, was largely in the hands of people who were interested in the welfare of the Red Cross, and the entire city block—again due to the advice and counsel of Miss Boardman, who indeed builded better than she knew—was secured for the erection of the building.

And so the fairy castle, the dream born of the happy memory of a loved one's devotion, began to rise out of the ground, white stone upon white stone, as Aladdin's palace rose at the bidding of the genii. Almost two years later, February 3, 1917, the Red Cross moved in. The dedicatory

ceremony took place on May 12, 1917. It looms now almost as a stroke of fate, or, wise provision of Destiny, as you will, that the building was ready for occupancy of the Red Cross just when it was most needed. Without it during the past two years, it is difficult to imagine what the Red Cross would have done. Before the war, it had already outgrown its quarters over in the State, War and Navy Building and many of its offices were scattered in various buildings about town. Knowing the congested condition of the capital during the war and the wholesale spreading out of the Government offices, we devoutly thank a kindly fate that made ready the home of the Red Cross just at the opportune moment.

BUT I have left you standing there in the great, wide hallway, watching the hurrying workers and contemplating the bright day from the doorway, while I have transported your spirit back into history, back to Antietam and Gettysburg and Appomatox, and made you feel the beat of the pulse of fifty years ago, when men fought for right and hearts loved and eyes wept just as they do today.

You know the inspiration that made the beautiful temple of mercy possible, the love and self-sacrificing labor of the thousands of sorrowing women of the North and the South personified in the one being in the mind of Francis Barlow.

It seems almost as if in fulfilment of a higher law, that the home of the Red Cross should have an inspiration so fitting. Wars come and go, but love endures, and this building stands as a monument to that love, in perpetual remembrance of its reality and truth.



RIGHT PANEL OF THREE MEMORIAL WINDOWS



THE UPPER PICTURE SHOWS A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE BUILDINGS WHICH COMPRISE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS—THE MAIN BUILDING IN THE FOREGROUND, THE EMERGENCY BUILDINGS AND THE CHURCH ANNEX BEHIND IT.

IN THE LOWER PICTURE THE WAR FORCE OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS—THE WAR COUNCIL, THE HEADS OF THE VARIOUS BUREAUS AND SOME OF THE HOST OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE JOINED IN MAKING THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Shall we ascend the white stairway, upon whose broad steps the sunlight lies in patches of gleaming yellow? Let us pause on the landing where the steps divide, and read what is said here, in letters of gold, upon the marble tablet:

A MEMORIAL

Built by the Government of the United States
and Patriotic Citizens

TO THE WOMEN OF THE NORTH
AND THE WOMEN OF THE SOUTH

Held in Loving Memory
By a now United Country

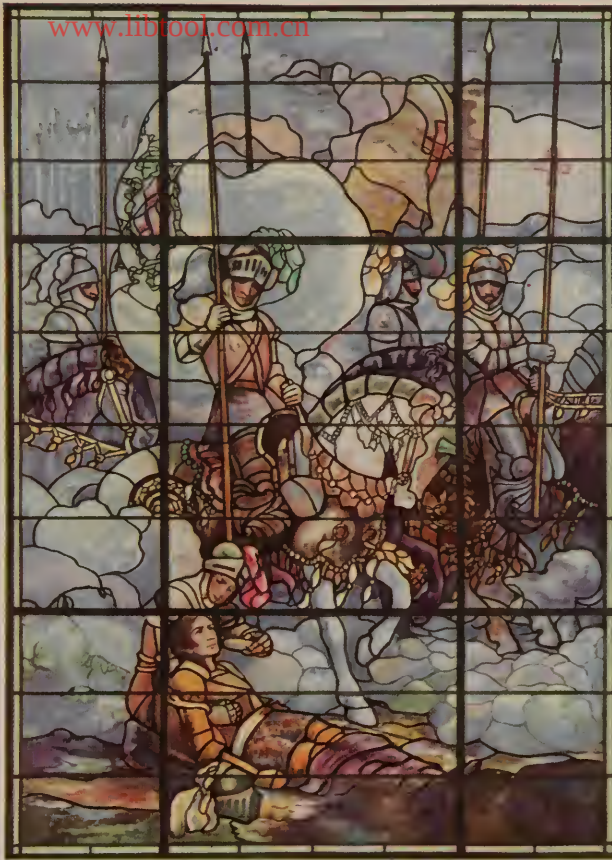
That their labors to mitigate the sufferings of
the sick and wounded in war may be perpetu-
ated, this memorial is dedicated to the service of

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

And our eyes lift to the three high windows just above, on whose broad ledges stand the three busts by Hiram Powers, personifying "Faith," "Hope," and "Charity." Even the all-vital business of war has failed to intrude here. There is no single jarring note. It is quiet and symmetrical and lovely. "That their labors to mitigate the sufferings of the sick and wounded in war may be perpetuated. . . ." No better cenotaph than this.

THE ASSEMBLY ROOM

The most interesting place on the second floor is the assembly room. It is on the left of the stairway as you ascend and occupies the entire north end of the building. This room contains the gorgeous and justly famous gift windows, three in number, that are said to occupy greater wall space



CENTRAL PANEL OF THREE MEMORIAL WINDOWS

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ASSEMBLY ROOM

than any stained glass windows of modern times. They are the work of Louis C. Tiffany of New York and are exquisite in design, execution and coloring. These lovely panels can be best appreciated when the light of the late sun shines through them, turning their rich colors to warm melting hues, imparting a warmth and depth to the stately figures that make them seem almost alive.

THE LEFT WINDOW

GIFT OF WOMEN'S RELIEF CORPS OF THE NORTH

At the left stands St. Filomena, who was famed for her miraculous powers of healing, a stately, fair-haired figure with a youthful face and wistful violet eyes. Her robe is gray and

her hands rest lightly on the Red Cross shield at her feet. Behind her troop her handmaidens, Mercy, Hope, Faith and Charity, coming down a woodland glade, with flowers growing at their feet. Hope bears a banner with the symbolic anchor, Faith a torch, Mercy a flagon of wine and Charity a basket of fruit. Blue-gray skies and billowy clouds form the background, which is common to the three windows, imparting a continuity, not only in color but in atmosphere, and lending a soft neutral tone to the whole that but enhances the richness of the deeper and stronger pigments. This, the west window, was the gift of the Women's Relief Corps of the North.

THE RIGHT WINDOW

GIFT OF UNITED DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY

The window on the right shows Una, of Spenser's "Faerie Queen," typifying fortitude, her apron spilling roses, symbolic of good deeds. Her attendants are with her, one bearing a white banner on which blazes a golden heart, another a cross, another a lamp—the "lamp of wisdom." This window was the gift of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

THE CENTRAL WINDOW

THE JOINT GIFT OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS

The central panel is perhaps the most impressive. It was the joint gift of the two organizations. It shows a good Samaritan in armor—the Red Cross knight, giving a healing draught to a wounded comrade. Above, as if in mirage, ride armored horsemen, some carrying spears, some white banners with the Red Cross. This typifies the Red Cross in war, riding side by side with the armies and succoring the

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wounded. The colors of this window are rich beyond description.

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Rich crimson curtains drape the four high windows at the east and west sides of the room and rugs of the same color cover the floor. Fifteen thousand dollars were contributed by Mrs. Adolphus Busch of St. Louis for the interior finishings and furniture of this room.

THE CONFERENCE ROOM

Then there is the conference room, with its fumed oak paneling and its dull green tiled fireplace and its curtained windows that give out on Seventeenth Street and the Mall. Here was once a long, carved table, running the length of the room, flanked by green leather chairs, about which the Central Committee, which is the governing board of the organization, is supposed to sit in conclave, but beauty has been compelled to yield to utility and the handsome table has gone for the time and desks stand in its place. The rest of the rooms on this floor are offices, interesting, of course, but not show rooms in any sense of the word. During the busy days of war this floor was occupied by the War Council and the General Manager. And there is a third floor also used for offices, among them the library where the records of the Red Cross repose under appropriate guardianship. In war days even the attic was pressed into service, in spite of the space afforded by the four annexes, on the lot behind the main building.



A CORNER OF THE LIBRARY

THE offices of the officials differ little from those of the more obscure workers, for those that enlist under the Red Cross banner are plain people in themselves, that place little stock in the meaning of artificial things expressed in terms of handsome office appointments and imposing surroundings.

Now I am going to take you downstairs again and show you the Department of Development, which has to do with matters connected with membership and with the work of Chapters throughout the country—the very backbone of the organization—then out into the annexes which are more practical than lovely, but which demonstrate more clearly than anything else the growth of the Red Cross work since April 6, 1917.

THE CHURCH ANNEX

At the time of the erection of the main building, there stood up at the other corner of the lot, at Eighteenth and E

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Streets, to be exact, a small, red-brick church, a plain everyday sort of church. This fortunately was not torn down but was early pressed into the Red Cross service and became familiarly known as the "church annex." It is now connected with the other annexes by means of covered passageways and houses the offices of the department of accounts, field disbursements, etc.

THE EMERGENCY BUILDINGS

You will decide at once that the emergency buildings have been built for use rather than ornament. They are intensely practical in structure, well lighted and roomy. Two of them are frame, while the newest one, Annex No. 4, has a stucco finish and is three stories in height. Passing



DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLIES

through them, you will hear the click of some six hundred typewriters, you will see men and women at work, men and women from all walks of life, the prominent and influential among the obscure. You will look in upon the Department of Military Relief in which originates all work connected with base hospitals, ambulance companies, camp service, canteen and motor service, etc.; the Department of Civilian Relief which has to do with the care of families of soldiers and sailors and with disaster relief of all kinds; the Department of Nursing where are enrolled and assigned the nurses for Army, Navy and Red Cross service; and several other departments of more or less interest; among them is the Department of Supplies, one of the largest and most impor-



CORNER OF STENOGRAPHIC FORCE

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS



CASUALTY RECORDS

BUREAU OF COMMUNICATION

tant phases of the Red Cross organization, in which millions of dollars worth of orders for supplies of every description, from surgical dressings to tooth brushes, from comfort kits to tea kettles, have been executed and Chapter supplies coordinated. Prosaic enough it looks, this big office with its rows of desks and typewriters, its tinkling telephones and hurrying messengers, but think of it, for a moment, in terms of the task it performs, and the whole suffering, hungry, naked world passes before you in panorama—ragged Serbs and starving Russians, little wide-eyed children left forlorn and alone by the war, soldiers enjoying the cheer of the canteen. The things that go to help them pass through the Department of Supplies.

We are at once impressed with the great spirit that lies behind the business-like atmosphere of the Red Cross, as demonstrated by just such instances as this. These desks and tinkling telephones are not making money for the people that sit behind them; they are not installed in the name of commerce or mammon. They are part of the equipment of the great Red Cross that binds the wounds of the world. Their mission is one of mercy and compassion and love—not ordinary desks and telephones and files, these. You must not think so.

There are two interesting features in the third annex, which faces Eighteenth Street—the Fourteenth Division and the Bureau of Communication. The former covers the work of the Red Cross in the insular possessions of the United States and the work of the American Red Cross Chapters and Branches that have been established in foreign countries, one hundred and fifty in number. Here is the link in the world-long Red Cross chain that binds the Red Cross at home to its workers who have made their homes in other lands, dreamy Honolulu, flowery Tokyo and the ancient city of Shanghai, Latin-America, the palm-fringed islands of the Spanish Main, far Vladivostok and sunny France. A lot of the world comes through these doors.

The Bureau of Communication is a busy place, if ever there was one, though less so now, of course, than during the war. This Department not only takes care of inquiries relative to soldiers in the fighting forces abroad, but also handles all civilian correspondence going into the enemy countries—or what were the enemy countries—and the

censorship and restriction on civilian communication have not been lifted at this writing.

Over in the fourth annex, the three-storied stucco one, is the Bureau for the Relief of War Prisoners. This has been the center of intensive activity in a most pathetic cause. The correspondence finding its destination in this office has laid bare a world of misery. Letters pouring out the hearts of captives in far-off lands, and those from weeping wives and aged parents, seeking news of loved ones that had fallen into the hands of the enemy, passed through the Bureau by the thousand and still continue to pass. Some of the letters are six months old or more before they reach the Red Cross clearing house. Some from prison camps in Siberia were directed to remote Austrian villages "via American Red Cross, Washington, U. S. A."—tribute enough to the confidence placed in the Red Cross. Food, clothing and money were sent through this Bureau for the relief not only of our own soldiers in enemy lines, but for Italians, Russians and French prisoners as well. One of the most intensely humanitarian phases of the Red Cross work, this.

You will say that the emergency buildings detract from the appearance of the main building. They do, and it may be that some day it will be possible to conduct the business of the Red Cross within the confines of the original building and thus do away with the unbeautiful though practical annexes. If it were not for the fact that such a condition would mean that the work of the Red Cross had grown less and its scope smaller, we would find ourselves wishing, out of love for the aesthetic, that this might come to pass and the



ANNEX NUMBER FOUR

white marble structure might be left to reign alone in solitary queenliness on her velvet lawns. And yet the work that has gone on in the plain, frame annexes has been as vital as that which has been executed in the halls of marble. The great, underlying spirit is identical.

It has been a great convenience to have had all the war-time work of the Red Cross, coming within the jurisdiction of National Headquarters, concentrated in one spot, where officers were within easy reach of one another and department heads and officials might readily seek one another in consultation.

TO those who come to the nation's capital, a thoughtful visit to the home of the Red Cross means many things. It is like touching for an instant the pulse of a great machine, although machine is a cold word, but there was and still is a distinct impression that the Red Cross is an industry as well as the working manifestation of an ideal and the personification and expression of the pity of men towards suffering. It has had to be intensely practical. Through its practicality it has succeeded; its ideals have remained untarnished, unsacrificed. Because of its practicality no soldier went hungry, or cold, or miserable; no frightened child lacked comfort, nor weary mother rest.

Think of this as you stand under the marble columned portico and know that under this roof move the great nerve impulses of the Red Cross that set it wheels in motion. Think of it, this temple in Washington, as the embodiment of the sentiment of the American people, the keepers of the heart of the Red Cross. You who see this have seen a thing greater than you know. You have seen the heart of America at work in behalf of suffering mankind. You have seen love soothing the woes of a troubled world and you see it as vividly today as you did in the middle of the year 1917, and so you will see it tomorrow, for love like this endures, goes on forever.

And to those who have not been fortunate enough to stand beneath its roof and feel its spell, its story will present a picture that will bring to them something of its inspiration. You who have labored in the Red Cross service will know and feel it and will read with ready understanding and an interest woven about that which is closest and dearest to

your hearts. It will be like reading the story of part of our own lives, ~~what someone has~~ conveniently jotted down. Years from now, when eyes that wept in the dark war days are dim, and hands that labored cheerfully have grown worn and thin and withered in love's service, it will read like a tale of youth. Memories sad and gay will throng about us, like ghosts that greet us from the past, and once more we shall see the marching ranks in khaki, the waving flags, the poppies of Flanders, the still crosses in the moonlight. . . . and over them all the spirit of the Red Cross.

March, 1919



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