FAIRFAX STATION

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"The angel of the battlefield"

The first Fairfax Station depot, built by Irish immigrants in 1852, was a stop on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad from Alexandria to Gordonsville. Early in 1862, after Confederate forces withdrew, the railroad carried military supplies and letters and packages from home to Union soldiers camped north of the Occoquan River and at nearby Fairfax Court House.

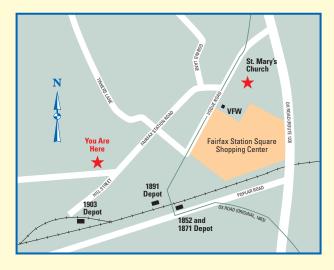In Sept. 1862, wounded Union soldiers were transported here after the Second Battle of Manassas for evacuation to Alexandria and Washington, D.C., hospitals. Clara Barton, whom an army surgeon called "the true heroine of the age, the angel of the battlefield," and who founded the American Red Cross in 1881, nursed the soldiers here. She later wrote, "We were a little band of almost empty-handed workers, literally

Clara Barton

View of Orange and Alexandria Railroad at Fairfax Station, March 1863.

by ourselves, in the wild woods of Virginia, with 3000 suffering dying men crowded upon the few acres within our reach."

Col. Herman Haupt, Chief of Construction and Transportation, ordered the depot burned after Barton and the last wounded soldiers were evacuated to Washington on Sept. 2, 1862. "Have fired it. Goodbye," Mr. McCrickett, a railroad employee, telegraphed Haupt. The Federals rebuilt the station just two months later. New York,

Vermont, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Delaware regiments guarded it against surprise attacks by Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart and Col. John S. Mosby until the end of the war.

New buildings completed in 1873, 1891, and 1903 served a growing Fairfax Station community. In the 1970s, the 1903 station was moved to this site. It houses the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, opened in 1988 to educate visitors about railroading, Civil War, and local history.