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# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## AMERICAN RED CROSS CENTENNIAL

1981 marks the Centennial of the American Red Cross which is being celebrated this year by Red Cross chapters across the country. The Albion-Eastern Orleans County Chapter will hold a celebration dinner September 14 at Sheret Post No. 35 of the American Legion. The formation of the first Red Cross actually took place twenty-two years prior to its establishment in the U.S. by Clara Barton. It was in 1859 when a Swiss businessman named Henri Dunant felt compassion for the dying and wounded on an Italian battlefield which led him to organize a permanent International Committee for the relief of wounded combatants which was the predecessor of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Albion Chapter of the American Red Cross became a reality in April 1917 largely through the enthusiastic support of Miss Anne Clarke, Mrs. P.W. Collins and Mrs. Dorothy Signor Blake. A workroom had been provided by Dr. and Mrs. A.W. Jackson in their home where surgical dressings were made by volunteers for a French hospital. With America's entry in W.W.I. the need became imperative to supply our own soldiers with bandages, socks, sweaters, mufflers and other articles of clothing. Mr. Harry Colburn as chairman of the enrollment committee secured the names of 675 people from Albion, Barre, Carlton and Gaines as chapter members. The eastern townships of Orleans County formed a Holley Chapter and western townships formed the Medina Chapter. The Holley Chapter later became a branch of Albion.

A Junior Red Cross was also formed which worked actively in collecting money. Between W.W.I. and W.W.II the Albion Chapter was instrumental in establishing the Public Health Service and milk program in school. The First Aid and Water Safety Program began in 1934-35. Funds were contributed to the Albion Fire Dept. for the establishment of an Emergency Squadron and to the Arnold Gregory Hospital for their first X-ray machine which was replaced in 1940 again through Red Cross Funds. Many advances also came about after the first Executive Secretary, Miss Inez Reynolds of Medina was hired in 1941. During the 1940's the Blood Program was started which continues today through eleven blood drives a year in Eastern Orleans County.

Pictured here working on one of the first blood drives at the Baptist Church in Albion in 1947 are: Mrs. Myron Babbitt, Mrs. Francis Blake, Sr., Mrs. Francis Blake, Jr., Mrs. Gerald Lynch, Mrs. George Grimes and donors Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Landis.