

Dorothea Lynde Dix Encyclopedia Article

Dorothea Lynde Dix

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1802-1877

American who led the crusade to build state hospitals for the mentally ill. In 1841 Dix visited a correctional facility in Massachusetts and was stunned by the treatment of the mentally ill. She lobbied the United States legislature to improve prison conditions and insane asylums and requested funds for an institution specially designed to treat the mentally ill in Massachusetts. She did the same in state after state, traveling thousands of miles alone throughout the U.S. and Europe until she was 80. Dix also served as superintendent of the U.S. Army Nurses during the Civil War.