



Celebrate! Holidays In The U.S.A.

Mother's Day

(Second Sunday in May)

On the second Sunday in May, American children of all ages treat their mothers to something special. It is the one day out of the year when children, young and old, try to show in a tangible way how much they appreciate their mothers.

England was one of the first countries to set aside a day to recognize mothers. In the eighteenth century when many people worked as household servants for the rich, "Mothering Sunday" was reserved for them to return home to be with their mothers. Though this custom stopped when the Industrial Revolution altered the working and living patterns of the people, one Sunday for Mothers was established as a holiday in the twentieth century.

In the United States, Mother's Day did not become an official holiday until 1915. Its establishment was due largely to the perseverance and love of one daughter, Anna Jarvis. Anna's mother had provided strength and support as the family made their home in West Virginia and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where her father served as a minister. As a girl, Anna had helped her mother take care of her garden, mostly filled with white carnations, her mother's favorite flower. When Mrs. Jarvis died on May 5, 1905, Anna was determined to honor her. She asked the minister at her church in West Virginia to give a sermon in her mother's memory. On the same Sunday in Philadelphia, their minister honored Mrs. Jarvis and all mothers with a special Mother's Day service. Anna Jarvis began writing to congressmen, asking them to set aside a day to honor mothers. In 1910, the governor of West Virginia proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day and a year later every state celebrated it.

On Mother's Day morning some American children follow the tradition of serving their mothers breakfast in bed. Other children will give their mothers gifts which they have made themselves or bought in stores. Adults give their mothers red carnations, the official Mother's Day flower. If their mothers are deceased they may bring white carnations to their grave sites. This is the busiest day of the year for American restaurants. On her special day, family members do not want Mom to cook dinner!

Embassy of the United States of America