



Mother's Day

Mothers' Day observance dates back to 1908

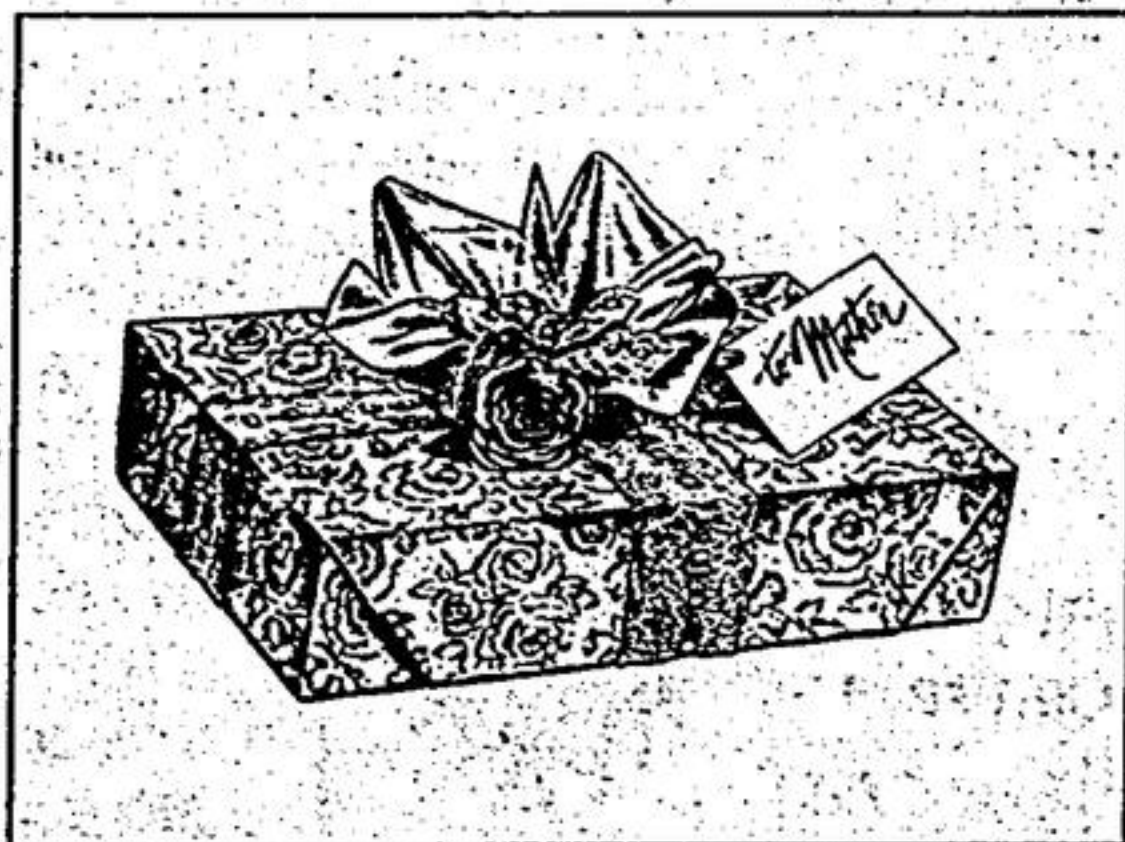
We all have mothers, which makes mothers as universal as the air we breathe! But it took Ms. Anna Reeves Jarvis, a Philadelphia school teacher, to come up with the idea of the modern Mother's Day as a celebration to mark the universality of mothering.

That's how it is, now, but here's how it was:

Ms. Jarvis and her family, came from rural West Virginia. At the turn of the 20th century, the family migrated to Philadelphia. It was there that the thought of a universal Mother's Day came to her, first expressed to a group of friends in 1907. So persuasive was her concept, so diligent was her dedication, that by 1908 she marshaled the support to carry out the first observance of Mother's Day in May 1908, back in her familiar surroundings of Grafton, West Virginia.

It was a simple sermon in a rural church, which is still standing and now revered as a historical link to an idea whose time had come.

That was proved by the proclamation of Mother's Day as a state holiday just two years later by then-Governor William Glassman. And, behold, just three years later, Congress proclaimed that Mother's Day should henceforth be a national holiday, marked by a Presidential Proclamation. The first was issued by President



Woodrow Wilson in 1914.

But the first Mother's Day required the interest and support of civic organizations in Philadelphia, and the persuasiveness of John Wanamaker, a Philadelphia department store magnate, to jump-start the observance. His interest and support galvanized other local influentials, and

so it was that Mother's Day dawned on the world in May 1908!

Today, some 85 years after its founding, Mother's Day observance is universal

through the United States (celebrated by 95 per cent of all people old enough to celebrate), Canada and more than 100 countries around the world.

The task of stepmothering takes wisdom and patience

The role of the stepmother is not exactly an easy one. But it's one that more and more women will be grappling with. Some because they've been widowed. Many because they have suffered through the agonies of divorce. Some, never wed before, but newly married to a man with children from a previous marriage.

Sociologists tell us that no less than half of the children today will, at some point in their lives, reside in a family where at least one of the partners is not a birth parent.

And the high incidence of divorce is not abating! It's often difficult for the new stepmother to win the confidence of her new brood. They resent the disruptions in their young lives and must get accustomed to a new authority figure.

The problem may be even further compounded if offspring from two previous marriages are mixed before matching. Then the task is to mold two different upbringings into one that brings two separate worlds into sync!

The transition takes wisdom, empathy, patience and good will - on everyone's part. But in view of the growing pervasiveness of the phenomenon, it's good to be alert and ready for the complex implications that can have a profound effect on a whole generation - and generations to come.

MOTHERS' DAY

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