



Life does begin with our moms!

It's May... and soon we celebrate Mother's Day!

By Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

COVER: Card created by my daughter a few years ago and Ann Jarvis photo!

Well, Mother's Day is arriving soon, and so I wanted to check out a little bit of history about this fabulous day. You see, in the early 20th century, there lived a woman named Anna Jarvis who had a deep love and admiration for her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis. Ann wasn't just any mother – she was a community activist who had organized “Mother's Day Work Clubs” in the 1850s to improve health and sanitation during a time when disease was rampant. During the Civil War, she also encouraged peace and unity, working to heal the wounds of a divided nation.

When Ann died in 1905, her daughter, Anna Jarvis, was heartbroken. She wanted to honor her mother's legacy and the sacrifices all mothers make for their children. So, in 1908, she organized the first official Mother's Day celebration at a church in Grafton, West Virginia. She handed out white carnations, which were her mother's favorite flower, and gave a heartfelt speech about the power of a mother's love.



Sharing and bonding between mom and son!



Yes, a handcrafted card for a mom!

Her idea caught on. Anna began writing to newspapers, politicians, and influential leaders, asking them to support her vision of a national holiday. And her persistence paid off. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation making Mother's Day a national holiday, celebrated on the second Sunday of May.

As Mother's Day became more popular, businesses – especially florists, card companies, and candy makers – saw an opportunity. The holiday quickly became commercialized, which deeply upset Anna. She had envisioned it as a day of quiet reflection and gratitude, not one of profit. But as the years went by, more and more businesses sought to capitalize on this special day. Anna Jarvis died in 1948 but her message lives on in every homemade card, phone call, or quiet visit spent with the our mom's and step-moms who raised us.

Now, in Georgia, Mother's Day is celebrated with a blend of traditional observances and regional customs that reflect the state's rich cultural heritage.

Well, did you know that while Mother's Day became a national holiday in the United States in 1914, Georgia has its own distinct history with the celebration. In 1991, the state officially adopted Mother's Day, aligning with the national observance on the second Sunday of May. This move was part of a broader effort to honor and appreciate mothers across the state.

And in coastal Georgia, particularly in Brunswick, Jekyll Island, and St. Simon, the "Blessing of the Fleet" is a significant Mother's Day event. This tradition, introduced by Portuguese immigrants during World War II, involves a morning mass, a procession honoring mothers, and a boat parade where shrimp trawlers are blessed by clergy. The event ends with a flower-laden anchor being placed in the water to honor deceased fishermen. This year, the 87th Annual Blessing of the Fleet in Brunswick will take place on Saturday, May 10, from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM at 2030 Powers Ferry Rd SE, Suite 340, Atlanta. The event features local vendors, free rose giveaways, and a celebration of mothers, stepmothers, auntie mothers, godmothers. at Mary Ross Park.

In Thomasville, the Pebble Hill Plantation hosts a Mother's Day Garden Tea, offering a serene setting for families to celebrate. The plantation, a historic estate, provides a magnificent landscape to host this and many other events.

Now In Atlanta, there are a variety of events and activities to celebrate Mother's Day, catering to diverse interests and preferences. Here are just a few we may be interested in attending.

- A Mother's Day Pop-Up Market will be held on Saturday, May 3rd, by Love Official ATL Weddings & Events.
- Then there is a celebration at Chastain Park Spring Arts Festival held on May 10–11, at 4469 Stella Drive. This free, two-day festival showcases over 185 artists, live acoustic music, DJs, an expansive children's area, and food trucks. Yes, it is very commercial, but great fun and bonding for our families.
- My favorite place is in Dunwoody at the Dunwoody Village Parkway – Taking place on May 10–11, at 1317 Dunwoody Village Parkway, this festival features over 130 artisans, a kidz zone with creative activities, live music, and festive cuisine from food trucks, Mother's Day hand-crafted gifts and just great bonding and fun for all of us.

So all across Georgia, families can celebrate Mother's Day with various activities, including dining out, giving flowers, and spending quality time together whether or not we attend an event. Many also participate in the tradition of wearing corsages during church services, with red or pink flowers signifying living mothers and white flowers for those who have passed. What a nice ritual.

So, whatever we choose to do on Mother's Day, let's all keep in mind the history of this day of honoring our moms and remember to take time to appreciate our moms, step-moms, auntie moms and grandmother moms.



A collage of events!