



Name _____

The Unofficial “Mother’s Day”

Learn about some special days that were made for “mom” before there was an official Mother’s Day and answer the questions that follow.

Mother’s Day wasn’t always an official day in the US. The roots of the modern American Mother’s Day date back to the 19th century. That means the 1800s. In the years before the Civil War that occurred from 1861 to 1865, Ann Reeves Jarvis of West Virginia helped start “Mothers’ Day Work Clubs” to teach local women how to properly care for their children. These clubs became a unifying force in a region of the country that was still divided after the Civil War. In 1868, Jarvis organized “Mothers’ Friendship Day,” where mothers gathered with former Union and Confederate soldiers to promote reconciliation. Reconciliation means to become friends or friendly again.

Another precursor to Mother’s Day came from the abolitionist and suffragette Julia Ward Howe. Abolitionists wanted to end slavery and suffragettes were people who fought for the right for women to be able to vote. In 1870, Howe wrote a letter called the “Mother’s Day Proclamation,” which asked mothers to come together and promote world peace. In 1873 Howe campaigned for a “Mother’s Peace Day” to be celebrated every June 2.

Juliet Calhoun Blakely was a temperance activist who inspired a local Mother’s Day in Albion, Michigan, in the 1870s. Temperance activists wanted to ban the use of alcohol. There was also the duo of Mary Towles Sasseen and Frank Hering. They both worked to organize a Mothers’ Day in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some have even called Hering “the father of Mothers’ Day.”

Questions

1. What were “Mother’s Day Work Clubs” for? _____

2. What did “Mother’s Friendship Day” hope to do? _____

3. What was “Mother’s Day Proclamation”? _____

4. Who was called “the father of Mother’s Day”? _____
5. What was an abolitionist? _____
6. What was a suffragette? _____