

ANNA JARVIS DEAD; HONORED MOTHERS

Founder in 1907 of Their Day
Fought Commercialization—
Penniless at Her Death

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PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 24—Miss Anna M. Jarvis, founder of Mother's Day and bitter opponent of the encroachment of commercialism into the observance, died today in Marshall Square Sanatorium in near-by West Chester. She was 84 years old.

Miss Jarvis, who in recent years was totally blind and partially deaf, had been living at the sanatorium since 1943. Each Mother's Day since then her room was swamped with cards and letters from well-wishers all over the world.

A militant, outspoken woman, she was embittered in late years, however, because too many sons bought printed cards to send to their mothers, instead of writing.

Began Crusade in 1907

Miss Jarvis was born in Grafton, W. Va. A woman of deeply sentimental nature, she began her life-long crusade to gain world-wide recognition for Mother's Day in Philadelphia in 1907.

She wrote to Governors, Members of Congress, editors and the White House to make the day official. Within six years it was observed in almost every State in the Union, and national recognition came in 1914 when President Wilson signed a Congressional resolution setting aside the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

After this country accepted her idea, Miss Jarvis turned her efforts to other lands, and at one time it was estimated that forty-three foreign countries observed the day. Then her correspondence grew to such proportions that she purchased the home next to her's as a place in which to store her papers.

Ironically, her battle had just begun, and she was to spend the rest of her career fighting the exploitation of Mother's Day by commercial interests. She denounced confectioners, florists and other groups whom she accused of gouging the public. She recommended the wearing of a carnation, her mother's favorite flower, on Mother's Day, but when the price of carnations went up, she adopted a celluloid button as the official emblem. She paid to have the buttons manufactured and distributed them without profit to churches, schools and other organizations.

Formed an Association

She incorporated herself as the Mother's Day International Association, and laid personal claim to the second Sunday in May. As the copyright owner she threatened suit against the late Alfred E. Smith, Senator Royal S. Copeland and others for planning a Mother's Day celebration in a New York stadium in 1923 because she feared it was commercialization of her idea. The program was called off.

So intense were her efforts that she ignored looming financial troubles. At first her work to establish Mother's Day was subsidized by a moderate fortune left by her mother and later by funds which she and her sister derived as principal beneficiaries of the estate of their brother, Claude, president and founder of a Philadelphia taxicab company. But the funds soon began to dwindle and her finances became an almost hopeless muddle.

As time passed Miss Jarvis and her sister lived in semi-seclusion. Their telephone was unlisted and they admitted few visitors to their home. In 1943, penniless and almost blind, Miss Jarvis was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital. When friends learned of her condition they formed a committee and pledged funds for her support. A short time later she was transferred to the Marshall Square Sanatorium in West Chester, Pa., where her health continued to decline.



MISS ANNA M. JARVIS.
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