

# Father's Day

In the United Kingdom, Father's Day is celebrated on the third Sunday in June and therefore the date of the festival is never fixed. Many countries around the world celebrate Fathers Day, though not necessarily on this date. Father's Day is one of those days where everyone gets a chance to honour his or her own father in a special way. This holiday has an interesting history which started many, many years ago. However, the holiday remains a very special day for those with fathers in their lives.

Sons and Daughters celebrate the occasion by honoring their father and expressing affection for them by presenting popular gifts like cards, flowers, chocolates and neckties. Young children often give handmade gifts to their Dad.

## Earliest History of Father's Day

Scholars believe that the origin of Father's Day is not a latest phenomenon, as many believe it to be. Rather they claim that the tradition of Father's Day can be traced in the ruins of Babylon. They have recorded that a young boy called Elmesu carved a Father's Day message on a card made out of clay nearly 4,000 years ago. Elmesu wished his Babylonian father good health and a long life. Though there is no record of what happened to Elmesu and his father but the tradition of celebrating Father's Day remained in several countries all over the world.

## Present Day

Father's Day is a celebration of fathers inaugurated in the early twentieth century to complement Mother's Day in celebrating fatherhood and male parenting.

After the success obtained by Anna Jarvis with the promotion of Mother's Day in the US, some wanted to create a similar holidays for other family members, and Father's Day was the choice most likely to succeed. There were other persons in the US who independently thought of "Father's Day", but the credit for the modern holiday is always given to Sonora Dodd.

Father's Day was founded in 1910 by Sonora Smart Dodd, born in Arkansas from Spokane, who was also the driving force behind its establishment. Its first celebration was in Spokane, Washington on June 19, 1910. Her father, the Civil War veteran William Jackson Smart, was a single parent who reared his six children in Spokane, Washington. After hearing a sermon about Jarvis' Mother's Day in 1909, she told her pastor that fathers should have a similar holiday honoring them. Although she initially suggested June 5, her father's birthday, the pastors hadn't enough time to prepare their sermons, and the celebration was deferred to the third Sunday of June.

It did not have much success initially. In the 1920s, Dodd stopped promoting the celebration because she was studying in the Art Institute of Chicago, and it faded into relative obscurity, even in Spokane. In the 1930s Dodd returned to Spokane and started promoting the celebration again, raising awareness at a national level. She had the help of those

trade groups that would benefit most from the holiday, for example the manufacturers of ties, tobacco pipes, and any traditional present to fathers. Since 1938 she had the help of the Father's Day Council, founded by the New York Associated Men's Wear Retailers to consolidate and systematize the commercial promotion. Americans resisted the holiday during a few decades, perceiving it as just an attempt by merchants to replicate the commercial success of Mother's Day, and newspapers frequently featured cynical and sarcastic attacks and jokes. But the trade groups didn't give up: they kept promoting it and even incorporated the jokes into their adverts, and they eventually succeeded. By the mid 1980s the Father's Council wrote that "(...Father's Day] has become a 'Second Christmas' for all the men's gift-oriented industries."

A bill to accord national recognition of the holiday was introduced in Congress in 1913. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson went to Spokane to speak in a Father's Day celebration and wanted to make it official, but Congress resisted, fearing that it would become commercialized. US President Calvin Coolidge recommended in 1924 that the day be observed by the nation, but stopped short of issuing a national proclamation. Two earlier attempts to formally recognize the holiday had been defeated by Congress. In 1957, Maine Senator Margaret Chase Smith wrote a proposal accusing Congress of ignoring fathers for 40 years while honoring mothers, thus "[singling] out just one of our two parents". In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued the first presidential proclamation honoring fathers, designating the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Six years later, the day was made a permanent national holiday when President Richard Nixon signed it into law in 1972.

Family History UK wish all our Fathers & Dads a wonderful Fathers Day