

"Mother's Day"

Carroll County Times article for 10 May 1998

By Jay A. Graybeal

The May 9, 1942 issue of the Binghamton, N. Y. Sun newspaper published a brief history of the first Mother's Day observance which mentioned the role of J. Hampton Baumgartner, a former Westminster resident:

"Here's the Story of America's first Mother's Day we believe to be true. Personal acquaintance with the man who had much to do with establishment of the day as living American Custom leads us to credit his version.

He is J. Hampton Baumgartner, manager of public relations of the Lackawanna Railroad. He prepared the publicity and helped to organize the first observance in accordance with the idea originated by Miss Anna Jarvis, of Philadelphia.

Miss Jarvis presented the suggestion to her friend, Charles S. Selden, of Baltimore, superintendent of telegraph of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Mr. Selden consulted Mr. Baumgartner, an associate official of the railroad, and an appeal was issued through the press that on a certain Sunday in May Americans pay homage to the memory of mothers everywhere. Miss Jarvis' idea was accepted immediately by individuals and by numerous organizations. The railroad officials developed a plan that resulted in thousands of employees of their company, the Baltimore and Ohio, wearing in their lapels, or as corsages, on a designated Sunday in May, pink flowers in honor of living mothers and white flowers in honor of deceased mothers.

And so, having established Mr. Baumgartner as an authority on the origin of Mother's Day, The Sun takes pleasure in presenting this tribute, of which he is the author."

The Sun also printed the above mentioned tribute by Baumgartner entitled, "Mother's Day":

"Mother's Day was a beautiful conception, a glorious inspiration. It gave expression to a desire which for ages had been pent up in the heart of mankind. Pluck the loveliest, the most fragrant blossom in the garden, and present it on that day to your Mother. And while doing so, repeat to her the intimate story of your love and devotion. Be sure to tell her, with reassuring earnestness, that your affection for her is as constant, that your love for her is as ardent as it was in childhood, when you were utterly dependent upon her.

She will be delighted -yes, gratified-to have you tell her so again, for no doubt she misses, to a much greater degree than you realize, the daily association and companionship between her and you in the days of yore, which companionship the routine changes of life have made it impossible for both of you to enjoy during recent years.

You whose Mother has gone to her blessed reward can perform no finer act of devotion, in fact you can render no greater homage, than to commune with her in spirit, turning back the pages of time and once again sitting on her knee to imbibe the sweetness of her character and the gentleness of her manner that have helped to make you a better person and that will keep you steadfast in that determination."

Mr. Baumgartner had a printed version made of his tribute which he mailed to acquaintances. The example in the Historical Society's manuscript collection was sent to Mary Test Kimmey in 1945 who, incidentally, is remembered as a mother of the Historical Society.

Photo caption: Test Kimmey likely paused to recall her mother Emily Gorsuch Buckingham Herr (pictured in c. 1875) after receiving a Mother's Day tribute written by J. Hampton Baumgartner. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Henry B. Kimmey, 1981.