

One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

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Colors seem to be the word of the day on Friday, May 13th. The brilliant white and scarlet red carnations adorned an interior of a church; the emerald green fields perched on the hillsides of Taylor and Barbour Counties; the azure sky of a spring-day, and the blue-green waters of the Tygart River were all beautiful, but they could not compare to the radiant glow of Jo Ann Ball's face as she did her job. She is the tour guide for the International Mother's Day Shrine (formally Andrews Methodist Church) in Grafton, West Virginia. It is an honor to hear Jo Ann tell the history of Andrews Methodist Church and its two famous women, Anna Marie Reeves Jarvis and her daughter, Anna Jarvis.

Anna Marie Jarvis was a mother of eleven children, but was also very active in church and civic affairs. She organized Mothers Day Work Clubs to prevent the poor health and sanitation conditions that existed in Grafton, Philippi and other surrounding towns. During the Civil War, she kept the clubs from separating since members were divided between the Union and the Confederates. When an epidemic of typhoid fever and measles occurred among the soldiers, the Mothers Day Work Clubs aided both the Blue and the Gray. After the Civil War, she alleviated post-war strife by holding a Mothers Friendship Day and invited all soldiers, Blue and Gray, and their families. They sang songs, *Way Down South in Dixie*, *The Star Spangled Banner* and *Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot*. She was also a Sunday school teacher for over twenty-five years and during one of the classes said, "I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mother's day. There are many days for men, but none for mothers."

Her daughter, also named Anna, may have sat in that class at Andrews Methodist Church in Grafton. Years later after the death of Mr. Jarvis, Anna Marie Jarvis and her daughters, Anna and Lillie, moved to Philadelphia. In early May of 1905, the elder Anna Jarvis passed away. By 1907 Miss Jarvis began lobbying for a religious holiday to honor all mothers. On the third anniversary of her mother's death at Andrew Methodist Church on the second Sunday in May, Anna handed out her mother's favorite flower, the white carnation, to the attendees of one of the first Mother's Day services in America. A diligent Anna lobbied businessmen like John Wannamaker and Presidents, Teddy Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson for a Mother's Day. By 1914, the national observance of Mother's Day was passed by Congress and approved by President Woodrow Wilson. There are many unsung mothers in America that need to be praised. Here are a few that we have met along the American Discovery Trail, or who are living near us in Downingtown, PA, and one about whom I have not met who resided in West Virginia.



In the fall of 1974 near Beckley, West Virginia, a young attractive mother made history when she clothed herself with heavy coveralls and a hard hat, the

clothes of a coalminer. They were the clothes of Carol Jean Bain. Coal mining in West Virginia has always been dangerous. The small mining town of Monongah, West Virginia was the scene of two devastating mine explosions. One in 1907 that killed 361 men and another in 1968 that took the lives of 78 men. Until 1974 the coal mines of West Virginia were also the exclusive domain of men. Carol Jean was a divorced mother of a young girl and was facing the uncertainty of poverty when she followed her father and two brothers into the mine to become West Virginia's first woman coalminer. For several weeks groups of women heckled and harassed her. For a short time newsmen made her into a celebrity. After thirty years her fame is all but forgotten. The coal mines of West Virginia are now largely abandoned. I pray that she and her daughter have not fallen back into poverty.

The plight of the single mother in America is often underemphasized. A single mother, whether she is divorced, widowed or never married, is ostracized in today's society, frequently to no fault of her own.

In Washington, D.C. where the Key Bridge spans the Potomac and the C. & O. Canal, we met a family of five living in a tent beneath that bridge. They appeared to be homeless but they were not panhandlers, as one may find in many large cities. The woman of the group was not despondent but joyful. She was a Christian and said that they would pray for us and our journey across this nation. I believe that the teens in the group were her children. Was she divorced and just evicted from her home? I do not know, but every time I think about her and her delightful disposition, I pray for her and her family. God bless her abundantly.

In 2003, Nadine and I encountered a lady, who was knitting a red, white and blue afghan for her husband, a national guardsman, who was sent to Kosovo for a peace keeping mission. This year her oldest son is now in the military. She, like all mothers, who have sons or daughters in our armed forces, needs our support and our prayers.

Last year in West Virginia, I have walked by a trailer, in which lives a Christian mother, who is grieving for her daughter, who has been in the national news for over a year. Even though I have never met her, I grieve with her each time that her daughter is shown on television. Please pray for the mother of Lynndie England.

There are many widows in our nation, who live alone. Their homes may be adorned with photos, their wedding photos with their late husbands, her children, her grandchildren and perhaps even photos of great grandchildren. They are probably living on a fixed income and their children may have now moved to a different locale. This year in West Virginia, Nadine and I had lunch with an elderly widow. She and other widows should not be forgotten. They need our love and attention.

Chester County, Pennsylvania is home for Adam, Jason, and John. They are three handicapped children being raised by their mothers. Two of the mothers are married and one is single. Two of the mothers are stay-at-home moms while the other alternates working at home and in an office with her spouse. Web site Salary.com shows that stay-at-home moms could earn an average of \$131,471 annually, including overtime, if they receive a paycheck for their labors. These mothers would also qualify as fulltime nurses, as well as teachers, housekeepers and

cooks. The value of these mothers is priceless. All you have to do is look at the smiles on those boys' faces to know that. Those children are blessed.

After a stay at the lodge at Tygart Lake State Park, the next day walk continued in northern Barbour County. After crossing a stream in Taylor County near a hamlet called Hiram (in the bible Hiram was the King of Tyre), I encountered Helen Exline of Thornton, WV, while she was walking south. She became the 44th person to join the prayer walk. When asked, "What can I pray for in this area?" she answered apathy towards God. There are many lost souls in this area. When asked if she needed prayer, her response was yes. Helen has a grandson, Michael, who is now stationed in Iraq. May the angels of God protect him. Also may Helen know the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. After leaving Helen, I ascended a long and steep hill very easily. Why did the walk become effortless at that point? As I was praying for Helen's grandson, Helen must have been praying for my journey. My strength does not come from high-energy foods nor drugs. It comes from our Lord, creator of heaven and earth.

After walking 13 miles, Nadine and I traveled to McKeesport, PA area to meet a friend, Kathy Laing. On the way there, we drove across a bridge named after a famous football player. I told Nadine that in the next century the gridiron exploits of that player and his name may be forgotten but deeds of one mother will be not forgotten because Mother's Day will never die.

On Sunday, we attended Port Vue Methodist Church with Kathy. There we discovered that Port Vue Methodist each year sends men in work crews to help in Philippi, WV. We all should be doers of the Word. Poverty is wide spread in many areas of West Virginia. To escape this circle of poverty, many youth join our armed forces to get a college education. Once they have a degree, many relocate. Presently 42% of the population of Grafton under the age of 18 lives in poverty. God bless these men who come to aid this area of our nation.

Since October 2002, we have experienced many incidents during our walks. We have seen God's awesome creation at the Great Falls of the Potomac and during a sunrise at Dolly Sods. We have walked where great Americans walked (President Teddy Roosevelt took vigorous walks along Rock Run Creek in Washington, DC; Robert Kennedy took a fifty mile hike along the C & O Canal for promoting physical fitness). We have seen our future leaders being trained at our U. S. Naval Academy. We stood where great men of valor fought and died at Antietam National Battlefield, but the experience of International Mother's Day Shrine outshines them all. Andrews Methodist Church was built by Americans to honor Jesus Christ, our Savior. Although the building is no longer an official church, it is still used for weddings and of course Mother's Day Service. The Shrine now honors the love of Jesus for us, the love of one woman who served Him her entire live and the love of all mothers past, present and future. All I felt in that building was love.

Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. I Corinthians 13:2

To learn more about the One Nation Under God –Walk Across America, go to our web site, www.walkacrossamerica.info.

God bless,
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Total miles walked of the American Discovery Trail	- 485 miles
Number of walkers	- 44 walkers
Number of people praying for America	- 37,512 prayer warriors

Today I encountered Terry, a mother of a fourteen-year old daughter. Terry needs our prayer. She is rejoicing because her husband is being released from prison tomorrow, but in four days she is being deployed to Iraq. She is very confused at the present time because she says she is not a Christian but would like prayers in her behalf. Pray for Terry, member of our US Army.