

His #5
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1st place

The Day of Honor and Remembrance

The true meaning of Memorial Day often goes unrecognized in our current time. Most of us get caught up in celebrating the beginning summer, and do not take the time to remember the reason we are celebrating a day off. This holiday does have a more sorrowful connotation, but this does not mean we need to be glum in our celebration. Memorial Day is truly meant to be a positive way to remember United States veterans who died in service to our country.

Memorial Day has not always been known as what it is today. This holiday evolved from another celebration known as Decoration Day. This holiday was specifically used after the Civil War. People would decorate the graves of Civil War veterans with flowers in their honor. This was observed on the 30th of May. Personally, I know Decoration Day to be a holiday celebrated by my grandmother. She visits a small cemetery in the mountains of Arkansas every June to remember her mother. Family members gather to put fresh flowers near the tombstones, clean up the cemetery, and pray together in honor of loved ones. The biggest difference between Memorial Day and Decoration Day is who we are honoring. Decoration Day has become a remembrance of any loved one, while Memorial Day is for those who have served our country.

Not long after the celebration of Decoration Day began, states began to recognize Memorial Day. New York became the first state to make Memorial Day a legal holiday in 1873. This would light a spark for other states to do the same. In 1971 World War II was over, and Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. This made Memorial Day a national holiday to be celebrated annually on the last Monday of May. It specified Memorial Day to honor casualties. This has shaped Memorial Day as we know it today.

Memorial Day is a positive commemoration of these heroes and not a mourning of loss. This holiday is also now used as an unofficial marking for the start of summer. The weather is warm and the holiday gives people a three day weekend. This makes for a perfect time to have a barbecue party, go to the lake, or take part in any other outdoor activity. Many people use these activities to observe Memorial Day in modern times. Personally, I participate in these things because my birthday often falls on Memorial Day. My family will go to the pool, the lake, or even a water park for this special occasion. All of these things are great, but we should take a few minutes to really remember the true reason for the celebration.

Memorial Day will always have a special place in my heart because it occurs near my birthday. Now that I have learned the real purpose of this holiday, I will always take time to honor that along with the festivities. However, the true meaning of Memorial Day is to remember those who have served our country.

Works Cited

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