

# September is

## THE HISTORY OF LABOR DAY

**Labor Day 2017: Monday — September 4th, 2017**



*"While we are fighting for freedom, we must see, among other things, that labor is free."*

-Woodrow Wilson

*"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."*

-Martin Luther King Jr.

Back in September 1882, certain unions had begun to celebrate a Labor Day in New York City. By 1894, this event was an annual late-summer tradition in New York and had been adopted by numerous states, but it was not a national holiday. On June 28, 1894, he signed an act of Congress establishing Labor Day as a federal holiday on the first Monday of September.

### **First celebration took place in New York City on Tuesday, September 5, 1882**

- Labor Day, an annual celebration of workers and their achievements, originated during one of American labor history's most dismal chapters. In the late 1800s, at the height of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, the average American worked 12-hour days and seven-day weeks in order to eke out a basic living. Despite restrictions in some states, children as young as 5 or 6 toiled in mills, factories and mines across the country, earning a fraction of their adult counterparts' wages. People of all ages, particularly the very poor and recent immigrants, often faced extremely unsafe working conditions, with insufficient access to fresh air, sanitary facilities and breaks.
- As manufacturing increasingly supplanted agriculture as the wellspring of American employment, labor unions, which had first appeared in the late 18th century, grew more prominent and vocal. They began organizing strikes and rallies to protest poor conditions and compel employers to renegotiate hours and pay. Many of these events turned violent during this period, including the infamous Haymarket Riot of 1886, in which several Chicago policemen and workers were killed. Others gave rise to longstanding traditions: On September 5, 1882, 10,000 workers took unpaid time off to march from City Hall to Union Square in New York City, holding the first Labor Day parade in U.S. history. [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)



### **Other Observances this Month:**

- September 4: National Wildlife Day
- September 8: Stand Up To Cancer Day
- September 18: National HIV/AIDS Awareness
- September 29: National Coffee Day
- September 30: National Family Health/Fitness Day

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