

Labor Day History in America

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The Declaration of Independence united the thirteen colonies into states, and the birth of the Constitution became the law of the land on September 17, 1787. With such unique guiding documents, the United States put into place a foundation that enabled the country to play special role in the development of Capitalism and Free Enterprise. Inventions, writings, and science, exploded because of Article 1 section 8 of the constitution with much thanks owed to Ben Franklin for giving us the patent law. It brought about Free enterprise and Capitalism giving us countless inventions and writings, in Science and the Arts, producing products and goods for the betterment of humanity giving us all the opportunity for living better lives.

With all of that came factories for productions of goods and services. The world changed forever. The increased need for production gave way for an opportunity of new types of jobs for the American people, it also brought about sweat shops, long working hours with low wages. There were no labor laws to regulate employees working conditions and environments or age restrictions of employees. All this took place at the height of the Industrial Revolution. Americans worked 12 hour days, and young children 5 and 6 worked in mills, and factories across the country earning a fraction of what older employees were paid. As manufacturing exploded and abuses prevailed it brought about the need for regulations and gave birth to labor unions and union bosses. Strikes

and rallies took place to protest unsafe working conditions. The unions purpose was to represent employees fighting to give them rights of better working conditions, fairer wages, and shorter working hours.



Unions gave a voice to the employees against the employers. As they negotiated contracts on behalf of the workers. In order for unions to survive they had to charge fees or dues of the employees for membership into the unions. Union bosses had the skills in negotiating those contracts that benefited the employees. Today, unions negotiate for many more benefits than employees ever thought possible or dreamed of. Those benefits negotiated for are medical and dental insurance, vacation pay, life insurance, disability insurance, maternity leave...

On September 5th 1882, ten thousand workers took unpaid time off to protest working conditions and marched from Union Square to NYC. This was the birth of the first Labor Day parade celebrating workers. Twelve years later Congress declared and legalized Labor Day as a workers holiday. Today we celebrate with family and friends, we enjoy parades, barbecues, firework displays, sales of goods and a day off from work for most. The holiday represents the end of summer and the beginning of the back to school season. This Labor Day marks our 136th celebration since the birth of the Industrial Revolution brought about by the United States of America!