



Celebrate LABOR DAY 2008

Do you enjoy eight-hour work days, paid holidays, sick leave and vacation time? Some of us take these important issues for granted, but they were in fact hard-fought working-class benefits won by unions that fought for them from the mid-19th century to present day.

Historical Overview of Labor Day History

In the early 1880s, a group of union organizers, the **Central Labor Union**, met in New York City to discuss dedicating a day for the working person. They put the call out to other unions to gather together to celebrate the first **Labor Day**.

The response was overwhelming: on September 5, 1882, more than 20,000 workers marched in a parade up Broadway on that first Labor Day. Workers carried strident banners: "LABOR CREATES ALL WEALTH!" and "EIGHT HOURS FOR WORK, EIGHT HOURS FOR REST, EIGHT HOURS FOR RECREATION!"

Twelve years later, in 1894, the U.S. Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September as an official legal holiday, now called **Labor Day**.

There are many versions as to how **Labor Day** was born. Resources for learning its history include the [U.S. Department of Labor's website](#), [Wikipedia](#), and the [Online NewsHour](#) of the MacNeil/Lehrer Report. They reveal that **Labor Day** was conceived and celebrated in 1882 by working-class union members for ALL working people.

Labor Day is different than any other holiday, as stated by Samuel Gompers, founder and President of the American Federation of Labor, 1898:

"All other holidays are in a more or less degree connected with conflicts and battles of man's prowess over man, of strife and discord for greed and power, of glories achieved by one nation over another. **Labor Day**... is devoted to no man, living or dead, to no sect, race, or nation." It is dedicated to the working class.

Today, well over a century later, our nation and many other industrialized nations celebrate the first Monday of September as **Labor Day**.

We should never forget how and why this holiday was born or where the idea came from. This first Monday of September, enjoy your day off as a holiday for the working class and thank your local union leaders! OR, better yet, if you haven't already done so, JOIN your local CSUEU CHAPTER!!!