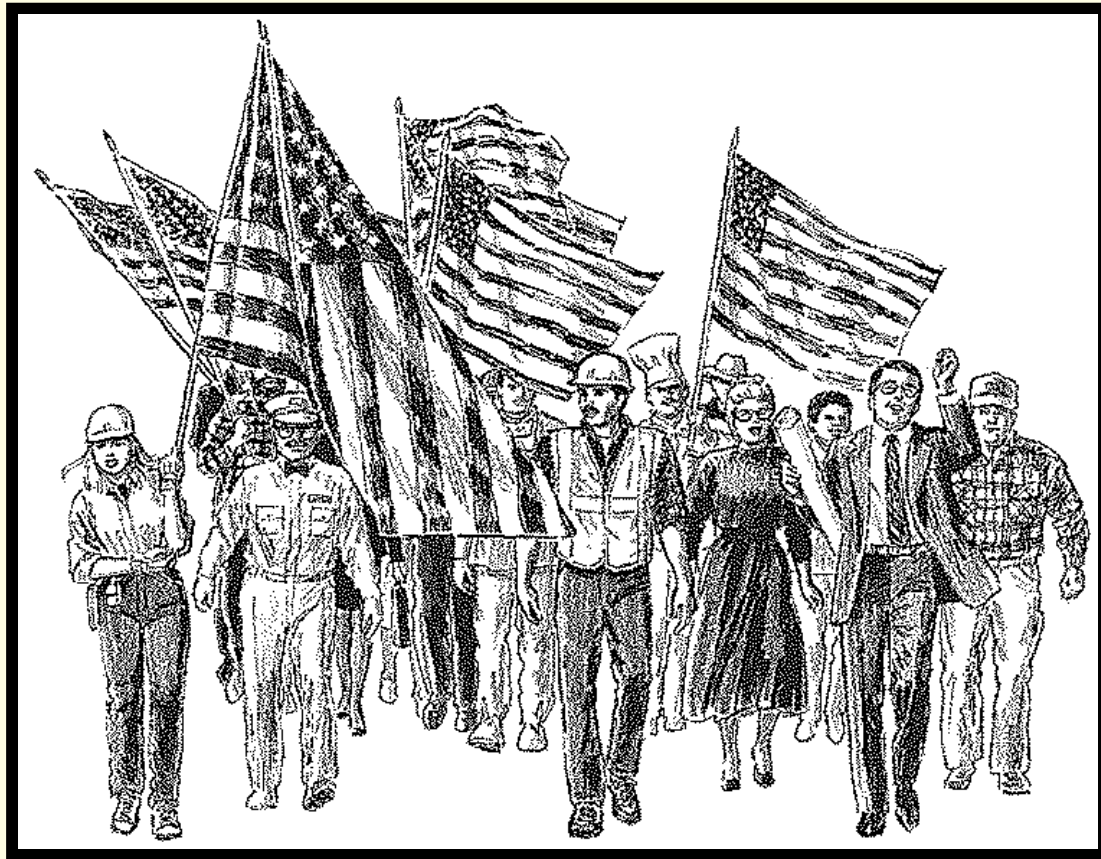
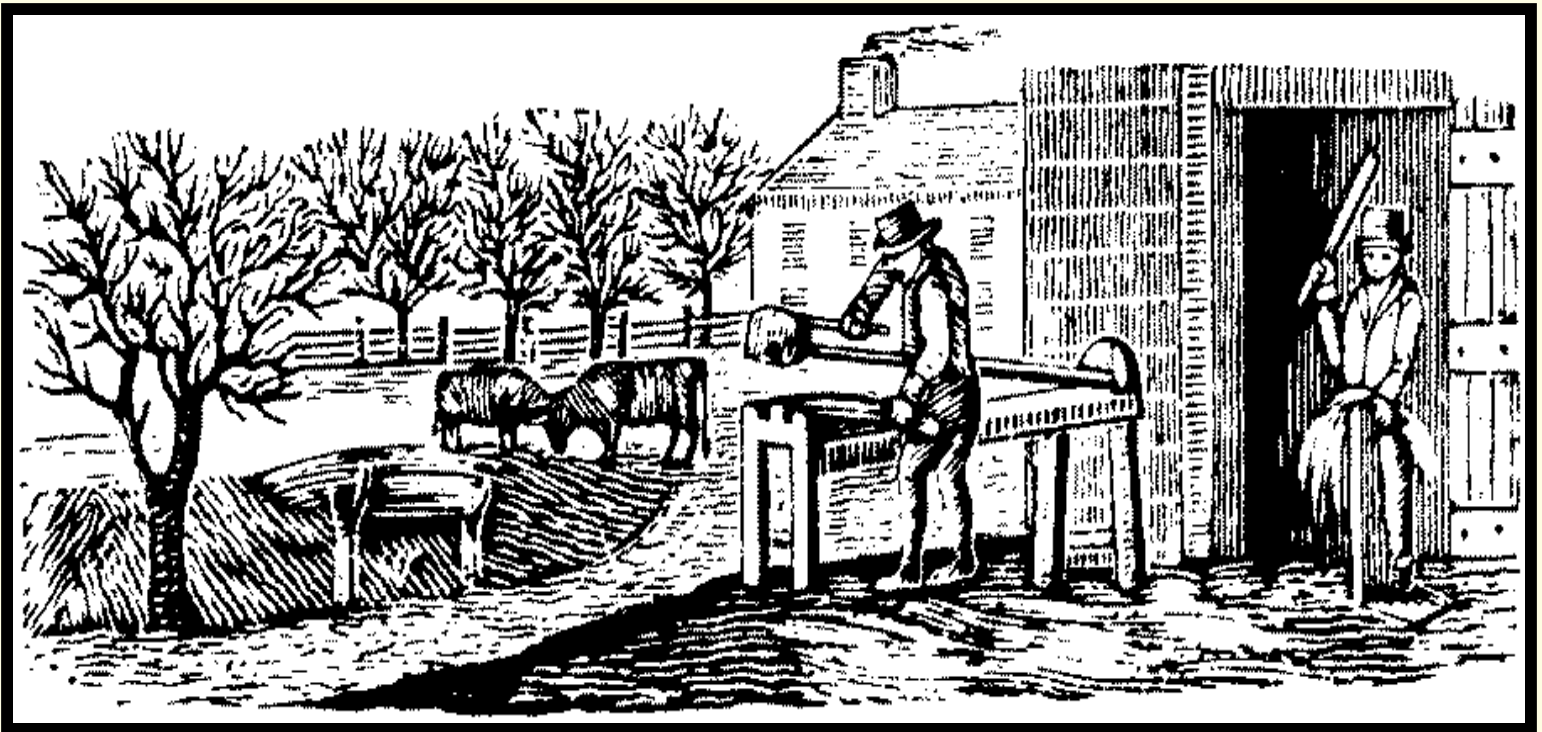
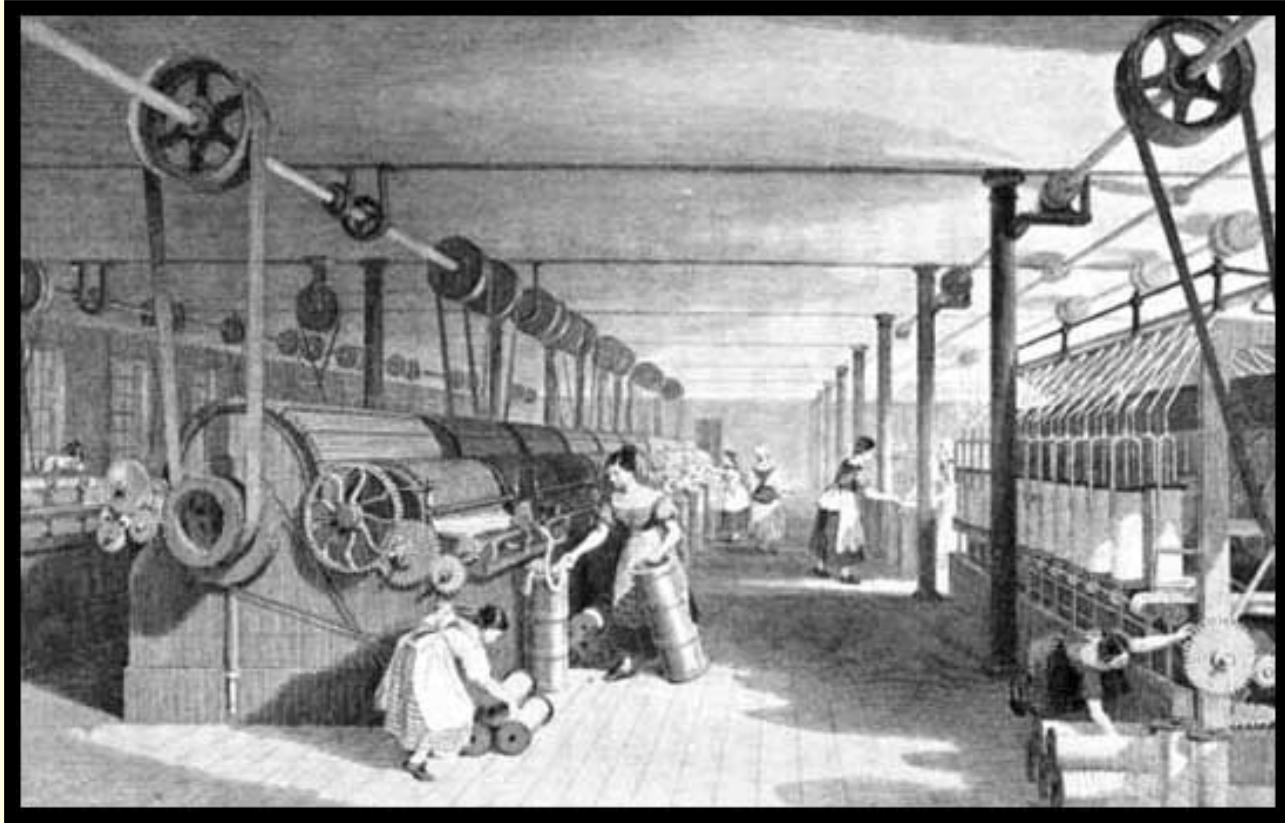


# How Labor Got Its Day





In Colonial America, most people worked for themselves. They farmed their own land or worked at a trade. Some did both. Goods like furniture, clothing, and shoes were custom made for each buyer. The work wasn't easy and involved long days but people received all the profits that were made from their work. Profit is the money that is left over after the costs of making a good or service are subtracted from its price.



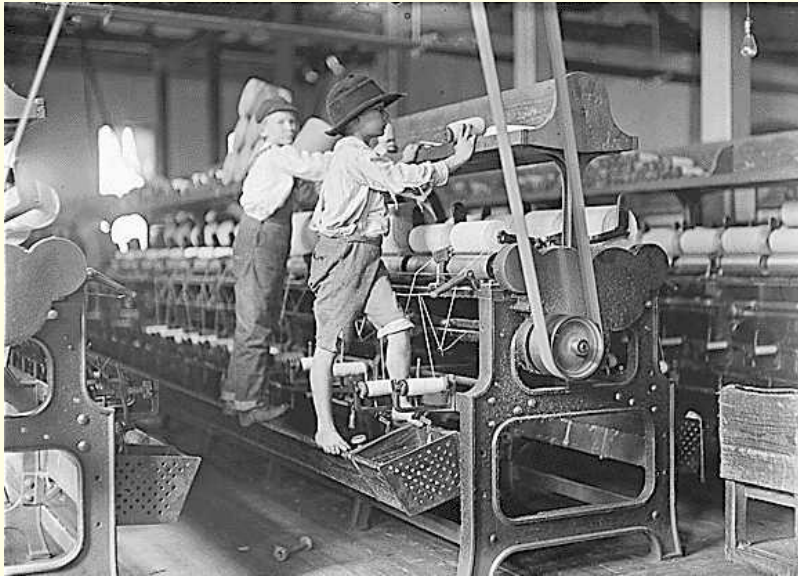
*Textile Mill, 1835*

During the 1800s, factories began changing how things were made and the way people worked. Large machines powered by water and steam made it possible to mass produce goods. **Mass production means people work together and make goods in large quantities.** Jobs became more mechanized and relied less on people with special skills. Almost anyone could do this work.



*Arriving in America*

The new factories required a lot of workers but there were plenty of people who wanted to be hired. Thousands of workers, especially immigrants who had recently arrived in the United States, needed work to survive.



*Textile Workers*



*Coal "Breakers"*

Even children were working. Families expected children to contribute to the household income. Children as young as five or six were sent to work in factories and in the mines that provided coal to keep the machines running. Some factory owners hired entire families.

Men, women and children worked 10, 12 and even 16-hour days. They only stopped working for a short time to eat.

Saturday was just another work day. In some workplaces, the only days that employees didn't work were Independence Day and Christmas. Even though people worked long and hard, their wages were very low. Look at the hours worked at the textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts.

FROM B. H. PENHALLOW'S  
PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT,

WYMAN'S EXCHANGE, Co.  
MERRIMACK & CENTRAL STS.

# TIME TABLE

## 1868.

### OF THE LOWELL MILLS,

Arranged to make the working time 66 hours per week. The **STANDARD TIME** will be marked at noon, by the **BELL** of the **MERRIMACK MANUFACTURING COMPANY.**

---

Breakfast,.....at.....	6. A. M.
Commence Work,.....“.....	6.30 A. M.
Dinner,.....	12 M.
Commence Work, after Dinner, at.....	12.45 P. M.
Stop Work, except on Saturday Evenings, at....	6.30 P. M.

---

#### BELLS.

Morning Bells.		Dinner Bells.	
First Bell,.....	4.30 A. M.	Ring Out,.....	12.00 M.
Second Bell,.....	5.30 A. M.	Ring in,.....	12.35 P. M.
Third Bell,.....	6.30 A. M.		

Evening Bells.  
Ring Out,.....6.30 P. M.....Except on Saturday Evenings.

**SATURDAY EVENING BELL, 5 P. M.**

---

YARD GATES will be opened at the first stroke of the bells for entering or leaving the Mills.

---

Speed Gates commence hoisting three minutes before commencing work.

## The Industrial Revolution (1800 - 1880)



*Women Working in a Steam Laundry*



*Bottle Workers*

Men almost always earned more than women. Factory owners sought women employees because they could pay them much less than men. They assumed that men needed the income to support their families while women used their income to create a dowry for when they got married or to supplement their husband's income.



***Injured Coal Miner and His Family***



***Boy Injured in a Mill***

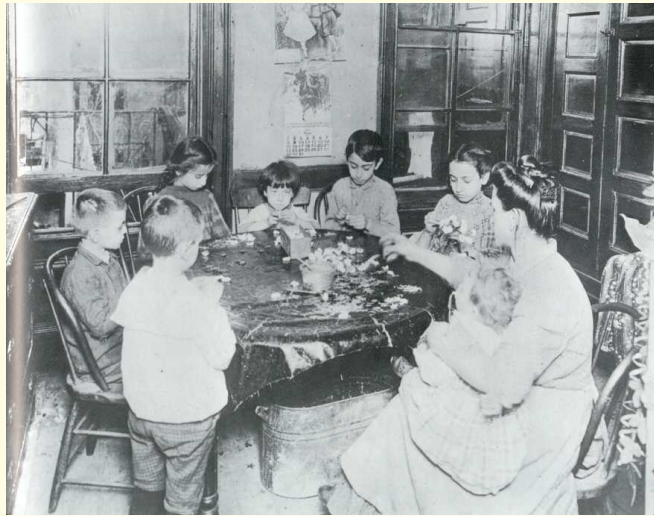
Workers could be so easily replaced that factory owners did not give much attention to the health or safety of their workers. Thousands of workers were killed doing their jobs each year. Many more were injured. There was no insurance to pay for medical expenses or to provide an income when a worker was sick or died.





*Tired Woman Going Home with “Homework”*

Workers went to work even if they were tired or not feeling well. They didn't have sick days. If they didn't show up for work, they might be fired. Workers knew they also might lose their job if they complained about how they were being treated by their employers. They feared being blacklisted which meant other employers would refuse to hire them as well. There were no unemployment checks to help the unemployed get by until they found other work.



*Mother and Children Making Flowers*



*Boy Transporting Work*



*Family Rolling Cigars*

Factories could be very crowded. Factory owners let workers do some jobs at home. Children often worked along side their parents at home. They would do simple tasks such as removing extra threads or putting together small pieces. Older children carried finished goods to the factories.

An increasing number of workers began to think that organizing themselves into unions might be a good idea. A union is a group of workers who join together to try to get more pay and improve their working conditions. Union leaders sit down with employers to talk about pay, working conditions and other problems. This is called collective bargaining. Sometimes, just talking was enough to reach an agreement that made life better for the workers.



*International  
Typographical Union,  
1852*



*United Brotherhood of  
Carpenters and Joiners,  
1881*



*United Mine Workers,  
1890*



*Bridge and Structural  
Iron Workers Union ,  
1892*



*Workers on Strike*

When workers and their bosses couldn't work out their differences, some workers chose to go on strike. This means that workers stop working to show an employer they aren't satisfied with some part of their job and want a change. This wasn't easy. Remember that workers could be fired if they complained. The striking workers had no pay while they were waiting for their employer to give them what they want. Sometimes workers and employers were so angry that people would get hurt and even killed.



***Peter McGuire***



***Matthew Maquire***

As the number of trade unions grew, their members began to hold parades and other events to draw attention to the importance of workers and how poorly they were being treated. In May 1882, an idea was proposed to New York's Central Labor Union (CLU) to hold a “monster labor festival” in New York City. The person usually given credit for this idea is Peter McGuire, a founder of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

Another person that historians say may have proposed this special day was Matthew Maquire, a New Jersey machinist and secretary of the CLU. Not a lot is known about Maquire's contributions to the event other than he was a key organizer who sent out the invitations.

No matter who suggested it first, the CLU thought honoring American workers with their own day was a good idea. It would give workers a day off, bring public attention to difficult working conditions, and help demonstrate organized labor's strength and unity.



The Central Labor Union selected September 5, 1882 for the labor celebration because it was halfway between Independence Day and Thanksgiving. They knew the weather would also still be warm. Few, if any, workers were given the day off. Most were warned against marching with the threat of getting fired.

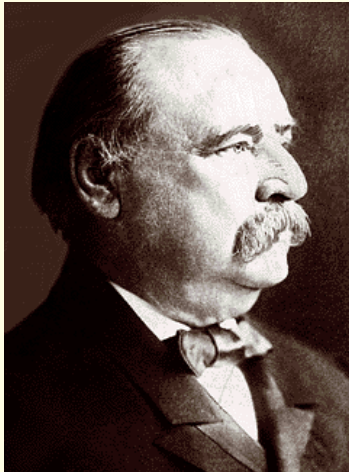
When the parade began there were only four hundred marchers accompanied by a band and horse-drawn wagons. Matthew Maguire rode near the front of the parade. As they proceeded along the route, more workers joined in. Eventually, there were 20,000 people marching! About a quarter million people turned out to watch.



*Picnic, circa 1900*

Later in the day, nearly fifty thousand people gathered in a park for picnics, speeches, dancing, concerts, and fireworks. Peter McGuire of the carpenters union was one of many speakers.





*President  
Cleveland*



*Labor Day, Buffalo, NY 1900*

The CLU urged others follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday." In 1887, Oregon became the first state to establish an official "Labor Day." By 1893, more than half the states were observing one day or another. A bill to establish a federal holiday was passed by Congress in June 1894. President Grover Cleveland signed the bill soon afterward, designating the first Monday in September as Labor Day. Just one month later in July 1894, Canada established its own official "Labour Day."



In 1889, an international group of socialists and workers who were meeting in Paris, France decided to show their support for the U.S. labor movement, particularly its demands for an eight-hour work day. They chose May 1, 1890 for their event. Afterward, the first day of May became a Labor Day holiday in many other countries. Sometimes it is called the International Worker's Day.

*United*



\*Stamp reproduced courtesy of Canada Post\*

*Canada*



*Myanmar (Burma)*



*China*

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