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# What Is Labor Day?

SEPTEMBER 06TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

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The United States Department of Labor notes that Labor Day is a celebration of American workers that dates back to the 19th century (1800s). The day is meant to commemorate the contributions workers in the United States have made to the nation, helping to make it one of the strongest and most prosperous countries in the world.

### Who came up with the idea of Labor Day?

Despite the fact that municipal legislation surrounding Labor Day was initially introduced in the 1880s, debate remains as to just who should be credited with proposing a day to honor American workers. Some records suggest that Peter J. McGuire, who served as general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and co-founded the American Federation of Labor, deserves the credit for Labor Day.

However, the Department of Labor notes that many people believe a machinist named Matthew Maguire (no relation to Peter) was the first to propose a holiday honoring workers in 1882. At that time Maguire was serving as secretary of New York's Central Labor Union, which later adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to plan a demonstration and picnic.

The first Labor Day was ultimately celebrated in New York City on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in accordance with the plans made by the Central Labor Union, which strongly suggests that Maguire does, in fact, deserve the credit for coming up with the holiday.

### Why celebrate Labor Day?

Labor Day is worth celebrating because, without the contributions of millions of workers every year, the United States would not be the success story it is and has been for more than 200 years. In addition to the United States, many countries across the globe, including Canada and Australia, have their own versions of Labor Day.

Labor Day weekend might now be seen as the unofficial end of summer. But this Labor Day weekend, celebrants and workers should remember that Labor Day also should be a time to reflect on the value of hard work.

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