

President General Proclamation

Labor Day

September 2, 2019

On Monday, September 2, 2019 the American worker will celebrate Labor Day and recognize its 125th anniversary. Labor Day is dedicated to American workers whose social and economic achievements have added to our nation's highest standard of living and production of goods and services.

A creation of the country's labor movement, the first Labor Day was celebrated on September 5, 1882 in New York City. Municipal ordinances passed in 1885 and 1886 created a movement to secure state legislation. While New York was the first legislature to introduce a bill recognizing the holiday, the first to become law was passed by the Oregon legislature on February 21, 1887. Legislative enactments that year saw four more states; Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York acknowledge the Labor Day holiday. By the end of the decade Connecticut, Nebraska and Pennsylvania had joined in its recognition.

By 1894, 23 additional states began to recognize Labor Day and on June 28, 1894 Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September a legal annual holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories. United States President Grover Cleveland, an SAR Compatriot U.S. President, signed the Congressional Act into law.

Early celebrations of Labor Day included street parades and festivals where workers and their families joined in recreation and entertainment venues to celebrate their achievements. As time went on speeches by prominent men and women focused on labors' economic and civic importance in our communities. Then in 1909 the American Federation of Labor passed a resolution adopting the Sunday proceeding Labor Day as Labor Sunday dedicated to the spiritual and educational components of the labor movement.

The United States Department of Labor honors “the greatest worker in the world” and pays tribute to American workers' contributions to our nation's strength, prosperity and well-being.