

Milestones in Labor History

--July--

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1971 - Five craft unions merge to form the largest postal union in the world, the American Postal Workers Union.

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1918 - National Federation of Post Office Clerks, Railway Mail Association and National Association of Letter Carriers address a joint letter to Postmaster General Burleson asking for department recognition of postal unions.

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1934 - "Bloody Thursday" in San Francisco when the city's mayor called out the police in an effort to hold off a strike by longshoremen. At least two died and a hundred were injured. Workers responded with a general strike, which prompted arbitration, winning longshoremen many of their demands.

1935 - National Labor Relations Act, or Wagner Act signed into law recognizing workers' right to organize and bargain collectively. The act also established the National Labor Relations Board to administer union representation elections, define employers' unfair labor practices, and enforce the legal rights of employees to join unions.

1965 - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), federal agency which investigates discrimination charges became operational.

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1892 - Striking workers battle Pinkerton detectives at Carnegie Steel Works in Homestead, Pennsylvania. After a 12-hour gun battle, seven workers and three Pinkertons lay dead. Subsequently, 9,000 members of the Pennsylvania were called in and helped to break the strike. As a result, the American steel industry was able to import cheap labor and operate nonunion for two generations, until a resurgent industrial unionism in the 1930s won recognition.

1933 - Delegates from four unions formed the National Leather Workers Association.

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1862 - Birthdate of labor organizer Ella Reeve Bloor. Among her activities were investigating child labor in glass factories and mines and going undercover to verify for federal investigators the conditions Upton Sinclair revealed in *The Jungle*, his expose of immigrants' exploitation by Chicago meatpackers.

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1987 - 5,000 APWU and NALC members demonstrate outside USPS headquarters to demand a fair contract.

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1892 - State militia breaks 13-day strike against Carnegie Steel Corporation in Homestead, Pennsylvania. During the strike, seven workers died in attack by Pinkerton detectives.

1917 - 1,186 striking miners deported to desert in Bisbee, Arizona.

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1877 - Start of the first nationwide railroad strike in history when Baltimore & Ohio firemen and brakemen walk off their jobs. Sparked by a steady deterioration of working conditions, including wage cuts of up to 45% and 18-hour workdays, the strike lasted two weeks and stopped traffic on two-thirds of the nation's 75,000 miles of track.

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1877- Pennsylvania trainmen seize control of railroads in Pittsburgh to protest 10 percent wage cuts. Two days later, state troopers move in, killing twenty people.

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1971 - First labor contract in the history of the federal government signed by postal unions and the postal service through the collective bargaining process.

1979 - Fired workers begin camping out at the gates of the BMC in Jersey City, New Jersey to demand back their jobs.

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1934 - Sixty-seven strikers wounded in Minneapolis truckers strike.

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1978 - Walkout by postal workers in New Jersey and California ignites campaign to defeat contract with a capped COLA.

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1970 - United Farm Workers forced grape growers to sign a contract after a five-year strike.