

Milestones in Labor History

--February--

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1865 - National Freedom Day. Anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's approval of the 13th amendment of the U.S. Constitution which abolished slavery.

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1869 - Birthdate of William D. "Big Bill" Haywood, labor leader and Industrial Workers of the World cofounder.

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1830 - First daily labor paper, the *New York Daily Sentinel*, begins publication.

1993 - President Clinton signs the Family and Medical Leave Act, requiring employers to grant up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for a family or medical emergency.

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1919 - Shipyard strike of 32,000 workers in Seattle, Washington sparks general strike as workers take control of the city.

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1864 - Birthdate of Mary Kenney O'Sullivan, factory inspector and labor leader. Appointed by American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers as the organization's first female general organizer.

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1817 - Birthdate of Frederick Douglass, former slave, abolitionist, writer and advocate of civil, labor and trade-union rights for African Americans.

1880 - Birthdate of John L. Lewis, United Mine Workers President and founder of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). He played a leading role in organizing drives of the 1930s, which established trade unions among mass production workers.

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1903 - Western Federation of Miners strike for eight-hour day.

1903 - President Theodore Roosevelt signed a law creating the Department of Commerce and Labor. Ten years later, it was divided in two separate government departments.

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1820 - Birthdate of Susan B. Anthony, female suffragist, women's rights advocate, and labor activist.

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1936 - Rubber Workers begin sit-down strike at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company.

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1792 - President George Washington signs an act creating the U.S. Post Office.

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1912 - Women and children beaten by police during Lawrence, Massachusetts textile workers strike.

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1913 - 25,000 immigrant textile workers go on strike against Paterson, New Jersey's silk factories in one of the most heroic struggles for justice in American labor history. Workers were forced by their employers to work 10 hours a day for as little as six dollars a week. Despite the workers' steadfast courage; mass arrests, lack of financial support, police harassment, and divisions between skilled and unskilled workers contributed to the strike's defeat.

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1979 - The American Postal Workers Union declares Amnesty Day to protest the firing of over 200 postal workers during the 1978 contract dispute.

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1918 - International Association of Fire Fighters founded.