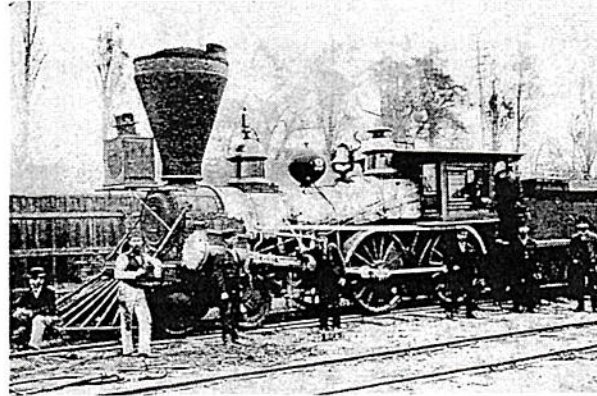


Labor Day

Some holidays have interesting histories. Labor Day, for example, began with a strike in a community called Pullman, which had been built by George Pullman in 1880. Almost everyone who lived in Pullman, on the southern border of Chicago, worked at George Pullman's company building railroad cars.

In 1893 things changed for Pullman and his little town. Pullman's business was not doing well because he did not have enough orders for railroad cars. Pullman had to dismiss hundreds of workers, and the workers who remained had to take salary cuts of 25 percent or more. Pullman did not lower rents on the houses, though, and he would not let his workers move somewhere else. The workers went on strike to protest Pullman's unfair policy.



Railroad employees across the country joined the Pullman strike, the first nationwide strike in America. Violence broke out when President Grover Cleveland sent in troops to break the strike.



Workers in Pullman and in many other parts of the country had been asking for several years for a special day to honor workers. In 1893 many of them were particularly angry at Grover Cleveland because of the action he had taken against the strikers. President Cleveland was up for re-election, and the strikes were making him look bad. To show his concern for the workers, and to earn workers' votes, Cleveland signed a bill to make Labor Day a national holiday.



1) Try to take it a step farther. Why did you choose this as your main idea?

2) Consider having them summarize the information into a few sentences

3) Why would they want you to learn about this topic?

