

Let me say this about that

## ...Labor Day #121

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The Northwest Labor Press is one of the oldest still-publishing labor newspapers in the United States. It prints more issues and reaches more readers than any labor newspaper west of the Mississippi River. The Labor Press has won dozens of journalistic awards from the International Labor Communications Association and its predecessor, the International Labor Press Association. This is the only labor newspaper to win an award from the American Political Science Association. That plaque was given for an expose' of corruption in the Multnomah County Coroner's Office which resulted in the election of a reform candidate and legislative abolishment of the office with its duties given to the State Medical Examiner's Office.

**THE LONGEST-SERVING** editor of the Labor Press was Clarence Mortimer Rynerson, a printer-editor who was a member of Multnomah Typographical Union No. 58. He ran the Labor Press as editor and manager from 1914 to 1939 when Governor Charles Sprague appointed him to the Oregon Industrial Accident Commission, later known as the State Workers' Compensation Board. Rynerson kept the Labor Press afloat through the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The Labor Press is on file in the libraries of a number of colleges and universities, including Harvard in Massachusetts.



CLARENCE RYNERSON

**OREGON DESIGNATED** the first state Labor Day in 1887 and celebrated it that year on the first Saturday in June. So, this 2007 Labor Day, on Monday, Sept. 3, will be the Beaver State's 121st observance of an official holiday honoring workers and their contributions to the betterment of our nation and its people.

The Oregon Legislature, in session in Salem, passed legislation in February 1887 which proclaimed the first Saturday in June as Labor Day. Democratic-Party Governor Sylvester Pennoyer signed the legislation into law.

**LABOR UNIONS** in New York City started staging Labor Day parades in early September in 1882 but those were unofficial observances because New York State did not officially designate a Labor Day holiday until after Oregon did so.

By 1893, 31 states had followed Oregon in passing a Labor Day holiday law. Most selected the first Monday in September as the date for their Labor Day. In the interests of interstate uniformity, the Oregon Legislature in 1893 changed its Labor Day date to September's first Monday.

**THE NEXT YEAR**, in 1894, Congress proclaimed the first Monday in September as a Labor Day national holiday and Democratic President Grover Cleveland signed the legislation into the law of the land stretching from the Atlantic Coast to the Pacific Coast. Canada passed a first Monday in September Labor Day law the same year. In 1889, some European nations designated May 1 as their Labor Day, and that date came to be known as May Day.

As was pointed out in the history of the Labor Press, the Tory-minded Oregonian newspaper sneered at the idea of a Labor Day holiday when the Oregon Legislature was considering it in 1887, saying, "This is the cheapest and shabbiest measure of the Legislature up to this date."

**IN 1916**, an anti-union Portland School Board also sneered at the idea of a holiday to honor the contributions made to public life by working people. The School Board scheduled the first day of the fall term to begin on the first Monday in September. The outraged Portland Federated Trades Assembly, the central labor council of that era, urged union families to keep their children out of school on Labor Day. The School Board got the message and learned the meaning of the word "boycott."

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United Food and Commercial  
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our wishes for a safe and fun  
Labor Day in 2007!**

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