

Freedom's Feast **LABOR DAY**

On-line resources to get the most out of your **AMERICAN** holiday celebrations.



Additional Ways to Commemorate Labor Day:

Songs and Poetry

America the Beautiful (First stanza)

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good
With brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

I've Been Working on the Railroad

I've been working on the railroad
All the livelong day
I've been working on the railroad
Just to pass the time away
Can't you hear the whistle blowing
Rise up so early in the morn
Can't you hear the captain shouting
Dinah, blow your horn
2 times:
Dinah, won't you blow
Dinah, won't you blow
Dinah, won't you blow your horn

Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah
Someone's in the kitchen I know
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah
Strumming on the old banjo, and singing
Fie, fi, fiddly i o; Fie, fi, fiddly i o
Fie, fi, fiddly i o—
Strumming on the old banjo.

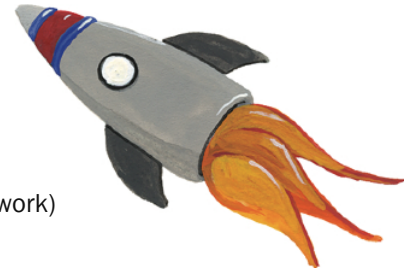
I Hear America Singing

WALT WHITMAN

(late 19th century poem about work)

I hear America singing,
the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics,
each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or
beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or
leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat,
the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench,
the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the
morning,
or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother,
or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or
washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night, the party of
young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

What strikes you about this poem?





An old farmer in Orth, Minnesota circa 1937.



Left: Two children of a German farmer do farm chores in Connecticut, circa 1942. Right: A sugarcane farmer in Louisiana, circa 1938.

Did you know...

1. [Family farms \(over 2 million\) account for almost 98 percent of all farms in the U.S.](#)
2. Check out other farm and ag facts [HERE](#).
3. In 2019, there were 30.7 million small businesses (500 or less employees) in America; businesses with fewer than 20 employees account for 89% of all US businesses.
4. From 2014-2019 Women owned businesses increased 21% though all businesses grew by 9%. [Learn more HERE](#) Stats for 2021 are not yet available but a Covid-related decline is likely

The Farmer

W.D. EHRHART

*Each day I go into the fields
to see what is growing
and what remains to be done.
It is always the same thing: nothing
is growing, everything needs to be done.
Plow, harrow, disc, water, pray
till my bones ache and hands rub
blood-raw with honest labor—
all that grows is the slow
intransigent intensity of need.
I have sown my seed on soil
guaranteed by poverty to fail.
But I don't complain—except
to passersby who ask me why
I work such barren earth.
They would not understand me
if I stooped to lift a rock
and hold it like a child, or laughed,
or told them it is their poverty
I labor to relieve. For them,
I complain. A farmer of dreams
knows how to pretend. A farmer of dreams
knows what it means to be patient.*

What does this poem say to you?

