

# Labor Day celebrations here go back long time

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Labor Day — most people take it for granted.

But, after last year's Labor Day Festival, many began wondering just how long the local celebration had been ongoing. Some believed it all began in 1923. Others thought it was older.

Gary Fritz of the Labor Day Association decided to find out. After his hundreds of hours of library research, the task is still incomplete.

did not know that (the festival received national attention)," Fritz said. "I guess they had nothing to compare it to."

Since the original festival, many traditions have evolved.

In 1901, workers from Little's Mine in Hosmer, Ind., was the best dressed marching unit, Fritz said. They did this by purchasing new work clothes for the parade.

The clothes cost miners the equivalent of three days wages that year, Fritz said. This year, United Mine Workers of America

one.

The UMWA continued the festival for several years before the sponsoring body was changed to the Labor Day Association.

Fritz also noted the festival had always been in conjunction with the county fair — either the Sunday before or the Sunday after. It would utilize the same carnival hired for the fair.

When the state moved the county fair dates forward, the Labor Day Festival had to secure its own carnival and concessions for a one-