1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **UNION SQUARE**

Other Name/Site Number: UNION SQUARE PARK

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Between E. 14th & E. 17th Streets and Union Square West and Union Square East Not for publication:___

City/Town: New York Vicinity:___

State: NY County: New York Code: 061 Zip Code: 10003

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	___	Building(s):	___
Public-Local:	X	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	X
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
___	___	buildings
1	___	sites
___	3	structures
4	2	objects
5	5	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on
DEC 9 1997
by the Secretary of the Interior

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Recreation and Culture	Sub:	Outdoor Recreation
	Recreation and Culture		Work of Art
Current:	Recreation and Culture	Sub:	Outdoor Recreation
	Recreation and Culture		Work of Art

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Stone
Walls:	Stone
Roof:	Metal
	Terra Cotta
Other:	Bronze

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Union Square is located between East 14th and East 17th Streets and Union Square West and Union Square East, lower mid-town Manhattan, New York, New York. The square itself is basically egg-shaped with the north end flattened. The park is densely planted with trees as it was at the time of the 1882 parade. At the north end of the park is a bandstand/pavilion and directly south of it is a statue of Abraham Lincoln. At the other three axis points of the park are commemorative sculptures and in the center of the park is a large flagpole. The park, together with the streets that surround it, is counted as one contributing site as the streets are important for their association with the first Labor Day parade on September 5, 1882. Also in the park are a World War I memorial and two subway kiosks. The Square is served by three subway lines.

The name Union Square is due to the fact that from early in the nineteenth century it was at the intersection [union] of major roads, Bloomingdale Road [now Broadway] and Bowery Road [now Fourth Avenue]. It was laid out in 1815 as Union Place. In 1831, a park, basically the same size as today, was mapped at that location, with its essentially oval shape, with passive functions identified and planting style to be established noted.

The park, which opened on July 19, 1839, has been regarded as "of great importance as New York's first public park modeled on the legendary residential squares of London (small, formal, lushly planted strolling parks)."[1] By 1849 the park had been enclosed by a heavy iron picket fence, with gates which closed at sundown. The original design included the oval shape, large central fountain, the fence, walks in cross pattern from the fountain and crossing the park, and rows of trees following walks and encircling the park, both inside the park and along the edge of the sidewalk. An 1849 drawing shows a fountain spraying water high into the air and heavy distribution of mature deciduous trees.[2] As the city began to expand northward the area around Union Place became one of New York's most sedate and exclusive suburbs, inhabited by the city's wealthiest citizens. Around 1872 the fence around the park was taken down and a pavilion was constructed at the north end. The pavilion would be the location for the reviewing stand and speakers' platform for the first Labor Day parade. The north end of the park, between the pavilion and the south side of East 17th Street was squared off in 1872, creating the general configuration existing today. It was at this time that the park clearly became a public park and received its present name of Union Square Park.[3]

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[1] Henry Walter Weiss, Letter to Hon. Gene A. Norman, Chairman, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, November 16, 1984. In Union Square File, New York Landmark Commission. Mr. Weiss, at the time of the letter, was Chair, Community Board 6, Manhattan; "Union Square Park: Design History," Union Square File, New York City Landmarks Commission, identifies the park as being a private residential park when it was opened.

[2] "Union Square Park: Design History;" Drawing by G. Hayward, drawn for *D. T. Valentine's Manual,* in Cristabel Gough, "Goodbye to Union Square?" *Village Views,* Vol. 1, No. 2 - September 1984, following p. 21.

[3] Federal Writers' Project, *New York City Guide* (New York: Random House, 1939), p. 200; "Union Square Park: Design History."

The park contains many examples of commemorative sculpture.[4] The most distinctive pieces were either in the park, or just outside the park within traffic islands, still considered part of the Square, in September, 1882. The most commanding of these is the bronze equestrian statue of George Washington by Henry Kirke Brown and his assistant John Quincy Adams Ward, with the base being designed by Richard Upjohn. The Washington statue was dedicated on July 4, 1856, after Brown had worked on it for four years. The statue, originally located in a traffic island surrounded by an iron picket fence, where the World War I memorial is located today, was moved to its present location in the center of the southern edge of the park during the 1931-1936 re-design of the park.[5] The Union Square location for a commemorative statue to Washington was chosen because it was at that location that there was a reception given Washington on November 25, 1783, by the citizens in recognition of Washington's leadership in the American Revolution and on the occasion of the evacuation of the British from New York.[6] At the north end of the park is the statue of Abraham Lincoln by Henry Kirke Brown. Completed in September, 1870, the statue was originally located in a traffic island enclosed with an iron picket fence in the southwest corner of the Square, corresponding to the location of the Washington statue at the other end of the Square. Lincoln is presented in citizen's clothes with a Roman toga thrown over his shoulders and the Emancipation Proclamation in his hand.[7] The statue was moved to its present location during the 1931-1936 re-design of the park. A statue of Marquis de Lafayette by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, was dedicated on July 4, 1876. The statue was presented to the City of New York by the French Government as a reminder of Lafayette's assistance to the colonies during the American Revolution and in recognition of America's help given the citizens of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71.[8] Originally located in the southeast corner of the park, the Lafayette statue was relocated in the mid-1930's to its present location overlooking Union Square East. The James Fountain, "Mother and Children," by Karl Adolf Donndorf, was placed near the center of the west side of the park overlooking Union Square West in 1881.

A more recent addition of commemorative art work is the 1924-26 80-ft. Liberty Pole with its 36-ft diameter base containing an encircling band of exceptionally well detailed bronze bas-relief figures by sculptor Anthony de Francisci. Integrated into the base is a bronze plaque with the entire Declaration of Independence and a quote from Thomas Jefferson: "How little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of and which no other people on earth enjoy."[9] While the Liberty Pole installation was created primarily to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence it also was to honor the Tammany Hall

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[4] Rex Wassermann, Letter to Gene Norman, May 14, 1985; The New York *Daily News,* April 26, 1984, quotes then Assistant Parks Commissioner, Bronson Binger, as saying, "these are the finest statues of any in the city parks."

[5] "Union Square Park: Design History."

[6] Moses King, *King's View of New York - 1896-1915* (New York: Arno Press, 1990), 55.

[7] Albert Ulmann, *A Landmark History of New York* (New York: Appleton-Century Company, 1939), 306.

[8] *Ibid.,* 305.

[9] *Ibid.,* 306.

leader, Charles Francis Murphy.[10] Hence, the flagstaff is often referred to as the Tammany flag pole.

Since 1882, there have been modifications to the park. The first modification came in 1915 with the construction of the BMT subway station and its maze of passageways, necessitating the raising of the ground level within the park.[11] A 1915 photograph of the Square shows a sign marked "Subway Express Station," located at the northwest corner of the park.[12] In 1935-36, after many years of neglect, the park got a new look. The ground level of the park was raised several feet above the street in order to allow for the construction of an underground concourse connecting various subway lines below. At the north end a colonnaded bandstand was located at the same site where the 1872 pavilion had been located. The bandstand was placed overlooking a large plaza where, according to a 1939 description, "automobiles are parked unless a mass meeting is scheduled."[13] Today, the bandstand looks out over that same plaza, which serves as a greenmarket on Wednesdays and Saturdays where regional farmers and food producers sell their products.[14] In the 1930's the Washington and Lincoln statues were moved into the park and the Lafayette statue was relocated. From 1987 to 1993 in response to public demands to clean up and revitalize the area the New York City Parks Department cleaned and restored the statues one at a time and completed a general overall rehabilitation of the park. The New York City Department of Transportation restored the public plaza at the north end of the park. The park is now well maintained and heavily used by the people of New York.

Within the park are the following pieces of monumental sculpture, previously mentioned, which contribute to the National Historic Landmark listing:

Equestrian Statue of George Washington, 1856, by Henry Kirke Brown and John Quincy Adams Ward, with base by Richard Upjohn.

Abraham Lincoln, 1870, by Henry Kirke Brown.

Marquis de Lafayette, 1876, by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi.

The James Fountain (Mother and Children), 1881, by Karl Adolf Donndorf.

The streets around Union Square and the park itself are counted as one contributing site.

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[10] Federal Writers' Project, *New York City Guide,* 202.

[11] Norval White, Elliott Willensky, *AIA Guide to New York City* (New York: Collier Books, 1978), 113.

[12] King, *King's View of New York*, 55.

[13] Federal Writers' Project, *New York City Guide,* 202.

[14] Richard S. Wurman, *NYC Access* (New York: Access Press, 1991), 108.

The noncontributing resources include:

Liberty Pole, constructed 1924-26, noncontributing object.

War Memorial, dedicated in 1934 honoring World War I dead, the work of sculptor Hunt Diedrich (1884-1953); located in the traffic island to the southeast of Union Square but still within the nominated boundaries, noncontributing object. There are plans to move the memorial to the grounds of the Veterans Administration Hospital on East 23rd Street and 1st Avenue.

Union Square Pavilion, a limestone Italian Palladian structure with terra cotta tiles, built in 1932 by the Parks Department, replacing several earlier structures on the same site.

Two Subway Kiosks, construction dates have not been determined, both are noncontributing structures. The other stairway entrances to the Subway are no longer functioning and are not individually counted.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:___ Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A X B___ C___ D___
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___
NHL Criteria:	1
NHL Theme(s):	V. Developing the American Economy 5. Labor Organizations and Protests
Areas of Significance:	Social History
Period(s) of Significance:	1882-1894
Significant Dates:	1882, 1894
Significant Person(s):	N/A
Cultural Affiliation:	N/A
Architect/Builder:	Sculptors: Bartholdi, Frederic Auguste Brown, Henry Kirke Diedrich, Hunt Donndorf, Karl Adolf Ward, John Quincy Adams
NHL Comparative Categories:	XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements H. Labor Organizations

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

Union Square, located in lower mid-town Manhattan, New York, New York, is nationally significant for the role it has played in the history of labor in this country. While it has been the focal point for well over a century for parades, mass gatherings, soap-box orations and labor demonstrations of a wide range of the philosophical/political spectrum, it is for the role it played in the first Labor Day Parade on September 5, 1882 and for the next twelve years in the achievement of one of labor's major objectives, the passage of national legislation setting aside one day a year to recognize the contributions/achievements of labor that Union Square is being considered nationally significant under the theme of Labor History in America. As Jonathan Grossman, the former historian for the U.S. Department of Labor, has said: "A good case can be made that the American Labor Day holiday grew out of the parade and picnic of the Central Labor Union of New York City on September 5, 1882."[1]

HISTORY

There has been general agreement among labor historians that the first Labor Day parade occurred in New York City on September 5, 1882. Some people, however, have made the argument that there were earlier parades, picnics, and demonstrations of a wide assortment supporting a multitude of labor interests, such as shorter hours, higher wages and better working conditions, therefore, the grand parade up Broadway to Union Square in September 1882 was not the "first" labor day parade. The case for this parade being the first Labor Day parade, rather than just a parade involving participation by representatives of labor, is based upon the fact that it was the first large scale parade including wide representation of labor after the idea of establishing a holiday that would stand separate and apart as a Labor Day was first presented to the Central Labor Union of New York City by Peter J. McGuire, in May 1882.[2] Thus, McGuire is credited as being the "author of Labor Day," although not unchallenged.[3]

McGuire, General Secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, which he organized in 1881, wrote in the union publication, *The Carpenter,* which he edited, in October 1889 regarding the origin of Labor Day: "in the spring of 1882, General Secretary P. J. McGuire, of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters first originated the observance of a distinct and a new holiday--with parade and picnic--to be known as 'Labor Day'." Eight years later McGuire again credited himself with proposing the establishment of Labor Day, naming May 8,

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[1] Jonathan Grossman, "Who is the Father of Labor Day?," *Labor History,* Vol. 14, No. 4, Fall 1973, p. 616. Grossman was the historian for the U.S. Department of Labor at the time he wrote the above article.

[2] B. Kimball Baker, "The First Labor Day Parade," *Worklife*, September 1976, p. 25; T. V. Powderly, "Labor Day: Its History and Significance," in T. V. Powderly and A. W. Wright, eds., *Labor Day Annual, 1893* (Philadelphia: The Labor Annual Publishing Co., 1893). p. 12.

[3] Grossman, "Who is the Father of Labor Day?" , p. 612; Mark Erlich, "Peter J. McGuire's Trade Unionism: Socialism of a Trades Union Kind?," *Labor History,* Vol. 24, Spring 1983, p. 165.

1882, as the specific date of his proposal. By the time of the 1889 article, McGuire was a national official in the American Federation of Labor, which he had co-founded with Samuel Gompers in 1886.[4] Because McGuire was an important member of the union hierarchy, organized labor tended to support him as "father of Labor Day."[5] McGuire's grave in Camden, New Jersey, continues to be a place where union leaders make pilgrimages on Labor Day, in recognition of McGuire's contributions toward that holiday's coming into existence.

Despite strong evidence supporting the claim for Peter J. McGuire as the "father of Labor Day," there is almost equally strong claim for Matthew Maguire, a fellow-member of the Knights of Labor. Maguire was Secretary of a Machinists and Blacksmith local of the Knights of Labor, which he had organized in Brooklyn in the 1870s, and was one of the organizers and first Secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York City in 1882. The New York City Socialist newspaper, *The People,* in an article written nine years after the parade, maintained that, "The first great labor parade was arranged by the Central Labor Union through the instrumentality of its first Secretary, Matthew Maguire." At the time of the article in *The People,* Matthew Maguire was becoming involved in politics as a Socialist. In 1894 he was elected to the position of Alderman in Paterson, New Jersey, on the Socialist ticket, and later was a candidate for Governor of New Jersey and ran for Vice President of the United States on the Socialist ticket.[6] Both Peter J. McGuire and Matthew Maguire were active in the Socialist movement, with Peter J. McGuire co-founding with Adolph Strasser in 1874, the Social Democratic Party of North America.[7]

While it is not possible to establish that either Peter J. McGuire or Matthew Maguire was exclusively the "father of Labor Day," it is undisputed that both were active in the Central Labor Union, which was made up of representatives of many local unions, predominantly Knights of Labor. It was the Central Labor Union that planned and directed the labor festival, which included a grand parade, followed by a picnic and much exhortation from many speakers. Although it is clear that both McGuire and Maguire deserve credit for promoting the idea of a special day, on a recurring basis to recognize labor, Peter McGuire wanted to extend the credit to the rank and file for, as he said in 1897: "the thought, the conception, yea the very inspiration of this holiday came from men in the ranks of the working people--men active in uplifting their fellows, and leading them to better conditions. It came from a little group in New York City, the Central Labor Union, which had just been formed."[8]

It seems that both individuals were so intimately connected to the details of the big event, that they should receive equal credit. As Secretary of the Central Labor Union, Matthew Maguire had the responsibility of sending special invitations to the festival. One such invitation was

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[4]Gerald N. Grob, "Knights of Labor Versus American Federation of Labor," in David Brody, ed., *The American Labor Movement* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 30.

[5]Grossman, "Who is the Father of Labor Day?", 613.

[6]*Ibid.,* 615.

[7]Theodore F. Watts, *The First Labor Day Parade* (Silver Spring, Maryland: Phoenix Rising, 1983), 6.

[8]Grossman, "Who is the Father of Labor Day?", 617.

written on August 21, to T. V. Powderly, Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, who also happened to be Mayor of Scranton, Pennsylvania. Powderly was invited to "be present at Union Square, 10 A.M., and review the procession of the Trade and Labor Unions of New York and vicinity" and to address the workers at Wendel's Elm Park at 92nd Street and 9th Avenue.[9] Maguire was secretary of the committee organizing the activities of the day and appeared to be the individual in charge of getting the parade underway.[10] Peter McGuire, on the other hand, was one of the many labor leaders on the reviewing stand at Union Square, and more important, he was one of the principal speakers at the picnic. During his speech, McGuire emphasized the special nature of the occasion and noted that "it was a festival of rejoicing, which he hoped would be repeated once each year." The festival, McGuire believed "would not be to celebrate a victory or a bloody battle, but in honor of labor coming into its own."[11]

By 1882 Union Square had become a popular meeting place for political and labor related activities. It had assumed a level of some significance during the Civil War because it was there that the Union cause was promoted through meetings, reviews, and parades of departing troops and in the torchlight processions of the pro-Lincoln "Wide Awakes," the Young Republicans of that day.[12] Most of the labor demonstrations during the 1870's were in Tompkins Square Park, located in the East Village section of Manhattan. It had been in Tompkins Square Park that a major labor demonstration occurred in January 1874 when 7,000 unemployed workers filled the park to protest the city's failure to provide any public assistance. What followed was a clash with club-wielding police. Samuel Gompers, who was caught up in the crowd, reported on what happened that day:

> Shortly afterwards the mounted police charged the crowd on Eighth Street, riding them down and attacking men, women, and children without discrimination. It was an orgy of brutality. I was caught in the crowd on the street and barely saved my head from being cracked by jumping down a cellarway. The attacks of the police kept up all day long--wherever the police saw a group of poorly dressed persons standing or moving together .... Mounted police and guards had repeatedly charged down crowded avenues and streets. To this day I cannot think of that wild scene without my blood surging in indignation at the brutality of the police on that day. They justified their policy by the charge that Communism was rearing its head.[13]

Three years later, at the height of a nation-wide railway strike, a labor rally was held in Tompkins Square Park in support of the strikers. There was every expectation that a repeat of

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[9] Watts, *The First Labor Day Parade*, 32-33.

[10] Richard P. Hunt, "The First Labor Day," *American Heritage,* Aug./Sept. 1982, vol. 33, number 5, p. 109.

[11] Grossman, "Who is the Father of Labor Day?", 620.

[12] Federal Writers' Project, *New York City Guide,* 199.

[13] Watts. *The First Labor Day Parade* , 21; Bernard A. Weisberger, *Illustrious Americans: Samuel Gompers* (Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Company, 1967), 22-23.

the 1874 police action could occur. The meeting ended without incident, with the New York Police Department taking credit for having averted a revolution.[14]

The Labor Day Parade and festival of September 5, 1882, represented a culmination of ten years of agitation for the 8-hour work day, elimination of repressive tactics of employers, support for Irish peasants' struggles against absentee landlords, dealing with massive unemployment caused by the long and severe economic depression of 1873, and frustration of dealing with police violence such as occurred at Tompkins Square Park in 1874. Planners for the big event, which included Robert A Blissert, President of New York City's Central Labor Union, and Matthew Maguire, wanted it to be "a monster labor festival" in which all workers could take part in a parade and a picnic that would include the workers' families. Fifty thousand tickets would be distributed to union men for 25 cents each, with women and children being admitted free.[15] Income from the sale of tickets was to fund a workingman's weekly paper.

To encourage a large number of workers to participate, the Central Labor Union, at its meeting on August 6, 1882, adopted a resolution which read: "Be it resolved that the 5th of September (Tuesday) be proclaimed a general holiday for the workingmen of this city and all workingmen be invited to be present."[16] A number of the largest manufacturers informed the Central Labor Union that they would suspend work for the day. The workers would lose a day's pay, however.

One of the principal objectives of the planners of the parade was to demonstrate the solidarity of labor through the volume of participants and to communicate labor's demands to onlookers at the parade as well as to a large audience of newspaper readers. In fact, the organizers invited the press to their planning meetings and counted on the press to respond favorably. The forthcoming parade and picnic were widely publicized in pro-labor papers such as the *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator, New Yorker Volkszeitung,* and *New York Truth.*[17]

The goals which the Central Labor Union established for the parade were well enunciated by its Grand Marshall, William McCabe, in the minutes of the CLU meeting on September 4:

> Let us offer to monopolists and their tools of both political parties such a sight as we will make them think more profoundly than they have ever thought before. Let us lift the curtain and show them by this demonstration some of the organizing work that has been going on behind the scenes during the past nine months.
>
> Every man who parades will thereby declare his independence of political parties: and thus, while adding to the chagrin of the common foe, he will add to the ardor of friends and inspire the weak with courage.

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[14] Watts, *The First Labor Day Parade*, 22-23.

[15] *Ibid.*, 58.

[16] *Ibid.*, 28.

[17] *Ibid.*. 34-36.

> We are entering a contest to recover the rights of workingmen and secure henceforth to the producer the fruits of his industry. Our demonstration tomorrow is the review before the battle. The greater it is the more thoroughly will the enemy be disheartened and the easier will our victory come. Let no man shirk, let none desert, let everyone be where his presence will contribute most to the common purpose.[18]

The Central Labor Union had planned the parade to coincide with the Sixth National Assembly of the Knights of Labor. The K of L, which had been organized in Philadelphia in 1869, had removed its oath of secrecy and started to admit women in 1881, would be holding its meeting in the Union Square area. Seventy-six delegates representing the 42,517 members of the Knights of Labor would be sharing the reviewing area at Union Square.[19] The Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, Terence V. Powderly, would join Peter J. McGuire and Matthew Maguire, as well as Robert Blissert on the reviewing stand.

The parade was organized into three divisions. Comprising the First Division were all organizations from Brooklyn, Jersey City, Newark and adjacent cities, and all city organizations below Canal Street. Starting point was City Hall. The Second Division consisted of all organizations east of Broadway, from Canal Street to Harlem. It started from Cooper Institute. The Third Division was made up of all organizations west of Broadway, from Canal Street north. Its point of origin was Washington Square. All divisions would end up on Broadway and continue up Broadway to East Fourteenth, then up Union Square East to East 17th Street, then west on East 17th, pass the reviewing stand at the plaza on the north end of Union Square Park and continue westward to Fifth Avenue. The parade would continue up Fifth Avenue to Reservoir Park [now Bryant Park], where it would terminate. From there the participants would disburse and join their families for the picnic in Wendel's Elm Park at 92nd Street and Ninth Avenue.

The First Division was to lead off the parade promptly at 10 a.m. from its position near City Hall. When 10 o'clock arrived only about 40 men had shown up. Spectators suggested to the Grand Marshall that he give up the idea of parading. But, William McCabe, an officer of the New York City local of the International Typographical Union, was determined to start on time with the few that were on hand. Suddenly, Matthew Maguire ran across the lawn, telling McCabe to wait for the Newark Manufacturing Jewelers Union. As the 500 jewelers turned into Broadway a few minutes after 10 A.M., they were marching to a band playing "When I First Put This Uniform On," from Gilbert and Sullivan's musical *Patience,* which was enjoying success in New York after its 1881 premiere. Soon a police escort of six police, McCabe, and his aides joined the march. There was some apprehension on the part of some workers and the reporter for the Socialist *New Yorker Volkszeitung* about the presence of police,[20] because of their memory of the

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[18] *Ibid.,* 33.

[19] Hunt, "The First Labor Day," 111.

[20] Watts, *The First Labor Day Parade,* 39-41.

terrible police brutality in the Tompkins Square Park incident in 1874. The planners of the Labor Day parade were insistent that the workers do nothing to incite the police.

The first workers in the line of parade were the 400 members of the Bricklayers Union No. 6, wearing white aprons. The first of eight marching bands in the First Division preceded the jewelers who were marching four abreast, wearing derby hats and dark suits with button-hole bouquets, and carrying canes resting on their shoulders.[21] Among the favorite groups in the eyes of the spectators and the press were the carefully drilled members of "Big 6" (Typographical Union No. 6), 700-strong who marched by with military precision. They were carrying banners, typical of the hundreds that were carried in the parade with mottoes such as: "Labor Built This Republic and Labor Shall Rule It;" "Labor Pays all Taxes;" "Labor will be United;" "No Land Monopoly;" "The Laborer Must Receive and Enjoy the Full Fruits of His Labor;" "The True Remedy is Organization and the Ballot;" and the "Government Must Issue All Money." The banner which got a great deal of attention was the one carried by Matthew Maguire's Brooklyn union, The Advance Labor Club, another name for a local Knights of Labor organization that was still maintaining a semi-secret identity. That banner read "Pay No Rent," in support of the Irish who were challenging the unfair rents they were being charged by English landlords. The obvious promoter of this slogan was the *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator* of New York.[22] The rear of the First Division was brought up by The Cigarmakers Union, carrying a banner which read, "Down with the Tenement System." This system, used by unscrupulous landlords, exploited immigrant labor by requiring those renting apartments also to have their families work as cigarmakers.

All of the divisions were presented in a similar manner. Each was comprised of representations of the workers in all of the trades in the section of the city designated for their respective division. All divisions would pass by Union Square. Great effort was expended to make the best showing to the press, the spectators lining the sidewalks, and especially to the dignitaries in the reviewing stand at Union Square. Some organizations particularly stood out as attention grabbers. The 1,000-man delegation of German Framers (structural carpenters) was such an example: "In the front ranks a dozen very tall men with beaver hats, clay pipes clenched in their teeth, huge axes thrown over their shoulders, and thick aprons hung at their waists." On the side of the wagon carrying their union officers, dressed in business suits, were slogans (in German) such as: "Agitate--Educate--Organize;" "Labor Creates All Wealth;" and "Land, the Common Property of the Whole People."[23] Each division had a large number of bricklayers, 3,000 from several locals, many with their own bands. Approximately 2,000 members of the Pianomakers Union marched with the Third Division. A man played a piano as the wagon carrying it moved through the parade route. Several glee clubs and quartet groups entertained the spectators along the way.

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[21] *Ibid.,* 41.

[22] *Ibid.,* 42.

[23] *Ibid.,* 54. Quoted from *New York Sun,* September 6, 1882.

After the three divisions merged on Broadway they created quite a visual sensation, resulting in the spectacle effect the planning committee had desired. As the paraders moved up Broadway many on-lookers joined the march and thousands of others, "anxious to get a good view of the first parade in New York of workingmen of all trades united in one organization," filled the sidewalks, occupied roofs, windows and even the lamp posts.[24] One of the things which distinguished this parade from all previous parades or demonstrations involving workers was the representation of union members at the broadest level and the unified front it presented. The number of participants in the parade ranged from 10,000 to 25,000, depending upon the newspaper reporting. The pro-labor newspapers invariably gave the higher numbers. The *New Yorker Volkszeitung,* for example, estimated that up to 25,000 went into Broadway, "in precise step, singing out the *Marseillaise,* alternating with the roll of drums and lusty, popular march tunes."[25]

Perhaps the most dramatic portrayal of the emerging strength of the labor movement was the illustration in the *Irish World* for September 16. The illustration, entitled "The Awakening Labor Gulliver," depicted a giant Gulliver breaking the bonds of restraint imposed by hordes of Lilliputian policemen and capitalistic industrialists. The same issue of the Irish paper contained an entire page devoted to banner headings like: "THE WAKING GIANT;" "Monster Labor Parade and Demonstration in New York;" "From 15,000 to 20,000 in Line;" "The Grandest and Proudest Display Ever Made in the Metropolis." A summary statement praised the success of the parade and noted the special significance of the parade's being in New York City :

> New York's monster Labor demonstration was a grand and impressive affair and an unqualified success. Such a demonstration has a broader and deeper significance in the metropolis than it could have any other point on the continent. Not that the wrongs of Labor are any more flagrant here than elsewhere, but New York is cosmopolitan and more thoroughly representative of every shade of sentiment among the laboring masses than probably any city in the world.[26]

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, in its September 16, 1882 edition, presented the parade as it moved up Broadway, onto Union Square East and past the reviewing stand at the north end of Union Square Park, in an extremely well-detailed lithograph. This artistic representation is the most commonly used graphic depiction of the September 5, 1882, scene at Union Square. The scene is as it would have appeared from the Everett House, Union Square's most elegant theater-hotel at the time of the parade. Although the article accompanying the lithograph was brief, it was complimentary:

> The demonstration of the workingmen of New York and adjacent cities on the 5th instant was in every way creditable to those engaged in it. Some 10,000 men

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[24] *Ibid.,* 51. Quoted from the *New York Sun,* September 6, 1882.

[25] *Ibid.,* 51. Quoted from *New Yorker Volkszeitung,* September 6, 1882.

[26] *Ibid.,* 40; *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator,* September 16, 1882.

> marched in the procession, and their orderly appearance and sobriety of man won hearty applause from the spectators who lined the sidewalks. Nearly every organization carried one or more banners, and many of the mottoes were highly significant and suggestive.[27]

Not all of the newspaper accounts were praiseworthy. The *New York Times* reporter used words that conveyed a sense of sarcasm, suggesting that the workers used the parade as an opportunity to be away from work. "A large number of the working men of this city and neighborhood," he wrote, "indulged in a parade and picnic yesterday, apparently for the purpose of enjoying a holiday, and at the same time making an exhibition of numerical strength." Yet, the writer felt that the parade did not present so imposing a display as was anticipated. "Ten thousand men marched through the streets with bands of music," in "an orderly procession and a cheerful display of working people with leisure enough for a special day's diversion." Neither did the writer acknowledge that it was the "object of the demonstration to air the grievances or press the claim of labor." Although there were hundreds of banners which unquestionably announced labor's concern, the *Times* writer felt that "their variety and vagueness gave little indication of any clearly defined purpose animating the ranks of labor." The tone of the article was one that suggested that the laboring class didn't really understand its place in the scheme of things. The writer could see no justification in singling out for special attention the person who labors with his hands: "Everyone who works with his brain, who applies accumulated capital to industry ... is just as truly a laboring man as he who toils with his hands." The writer went on to comment on the "chief impression produced by a labor demonstration" as being "almost invariably that of a lack of comprehension among those taking part in it of the elements of the problem which they are continually trying to solve." The line separating "what is called the laboring class from the rest of the working forces of the community," is a shadowy one, he maintained. "There is just one solution to this problem for working men," he said. All the working men had to do was to "bend their energies" toward the promotion of clearer intelligence, better knowledge, and higher education ... which will inevitably tend toward equalizing rewards for industrial effort."[28]

The procession took an hour to pass the reviewing stand. That was an amazing achievement, considering that speeches were made by Daniel F. Sheehan, John Swinton [*New York Sun*], Robert Blissert and Henry Appleton, Terence V. Powderly, and Peter J. McGuire. Present on the reviewing stand were 76 individuals attending the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, representing 14 states and the District of Columbia. Hopefully, the visiting dignitaries would report back to their local unions what they had witnessed. After all, they were on the reviewing stand as a direct result of the invitation of the Secretary of the Central Labor Union, Matthew Maguire.

Powderly wrote in the *Labor Day Annual* concerning the first Labor Day parade: "A recess was taken in order to review the great parade at the request of the Central Labor Union, and the members witnessed the first Labor Day parade." Powderly noted that the term Labor Day came into being as the result of a comment made by one of the individuals on the reviewing stand.

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[27] *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* September 16, 1882.

[28] The *New York Times,* September 6, 1882.

Apparently moved with emotion by the impact of the procession as it passed the "Grand Stand at Union Square, Robert Price, of Lonaconing, Maryland, turned to the General Worthy Foreman of the Knights of Labor, Richard Griffiths, and said: 'This is Labor Day in earnest, Uncle Dick.' That event was afterwards referred to as Labor Day parade."[29]

From Union Square the parade continued west on East 17th Street to Fifth Avenue, then to Reservoir Park at East 42nd Street. The next event, the picnic, took place at Wendel's Elm Park at East 92nd Street and Ninth Avenue. About 25,000 workers and their families enjoyed the festivities there. Included were four hours of speech-making, which, apparently was welcomed by the attendees; "applause interrupted the speeches from first to last."[30] Merrymaking, dancing, and fireworks carried the celebration well into the night. The first Labor Day was truly a "day of the people."

Interest in setting aside one day during the year to give special recognition to labor did not end with the first Labor Day parade. In 1883 New York again observed Labor Day by parading on the first Monday in September. The following year both the Knights and the Organized Trades (the predecessor of the American Federation of Labor) passed resolutions to make the first Monday in September a permanent holiday.[31] Immediate steps were taken to have the New York Legislature enact legislation creating Labor Day. While New York was the first state to introduce such legislation, it was Oregon that was first to pass such legislation. That occurred on February 21, 1887. By May 11, 1887, four other states had enacted legislation making the first Monday in September the official Labor Day, in the following order: Colorado, March 15, 1887; New Jersey, April 8, 1887; New York, May 6, 1887; Massachusetts, May 11, 1887. Twenty-five states had adopted Labor Day legislation by September 1893. All except California, Louisiana, and Wisconsin had the first Monday in September as the legal holiday for Labor Day.[32]

It remained now for the federal government to do something about creating a national holiday honoring labor. A proposal to do that remained in Congress until 1894. At that time Senator James Henderson Kyle, Populist from South Dakota, and Representative Amos J. Cummings, Democrat from New York, introduced bills which were passed by both houses of Congress without opposition.[33] Representative Cummings personally carried the bill making Labor Day a national holiday to the White House for President Grover Cleveland's signature. President Cleveland signed the bill into law on June 28, 1894, then gave the pen used for the signing to Representative Cummings, who sent it to Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor. This legislation established the national holiday for workers in the federal

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[29] Powderly, "Labor Day: Its History and Significance," 12.

[30] Watts, *The First Labor Day Parade,* 59.

[31] Baker, "The First Labor Day Parade," 25; Powderly, "Labor Day: Its History and Significance," 12.

[32] Powderly, "Labor Day: Its History and Significance," 13-15.

[33] Grossman, "Who is the Father of Labor Day?", 622.

government, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.[34] When Wyoming enacted Labor Day legislation in 1923, all of the states had a special holiday honoring labor.

While it may still be debatable as to whether it was idealistic Matthew Maguire ("faithful old Mat") or philosophical Peter J. McGuire who was the "father" of Labor Day, it was Peter McGuire who ably expressed the meaning of Labor Day to him:

> No festival of martial glory of warrior's renown is this; no pageant pomp of warlike conquest, no glory of fratricidal strike attend this day. It is dedicated to Peace, Civilization and the triumphs of Industry. It is a demonstration of fraternity and the harbinger of a better age--a more chivalrous time, when labor shall be best honored and well rewarded.. . . It was reserved . . . for the American people, to give birth to Labor Day. In this they honor the toilers of the earth, and pay homage to those who from rude nature have delved and carved all the comfort and grandeur we behold.[35]

While the grand parade and the picnic of 1882, with much of the attention focused on Union Square because of the placement of the reviewing stand in the pavilion at the north end of the park, did not in itself create the Labor Day holiday, it was during preparation for the event that the idea was first espoused and it was in Union Square that the expression "Labor Day" first took hold. Much enthusiasm was generated by the activities of September 5, 1882, and quickly spread. It was through demonstrations such as the grand parade that the Knights of Labor, through the Central Labor Union of New York City, hoped to convince state governments and the national government to set aside one day a year to honor the workingman. A recent historian has stated that the annual Labor Day holiday survives as perhaps the most permanent contribution of the Knights of Labor to the American scene.[36] Another scholar has asserted that the Central Labor Union's "greatest and most enduring contribution to the promotion of the labor movement through public spectacle and event . . . came with its establishment of 'Labor Day' as the holiday honoring the nation's toiler" and cites the events of September 5, 1882 as the catalyst for the annual celebration.[37]

Union Square was brought into the national picture, as far as labor history is concerned, with the Labor Day parade of September 5, 1882. Later, into the twentieth century, Union Square became a center for radical activities, "where speechmakers spoke on soapboxes and where protest marches began."[38] It was during the years preceding World War I that the Square assumed

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[34] The *Washington Post,* June 29, 1894; Baker, "The First Labor Day Parade," 26.

[35] Grossman, "Who is the Father of Labor Day?", 623. Quoted from P. J. McGuire, "Labor Day, Its Birth and Significance," *The Carpenter,* September 1897.

[36] Weisberger, *Illustrious Americans: Samuel Gompers*, 131.

[37] Edward Thomas O'Donell, "Henry George and the 'New Political Forces': Ethnic Nationalism, Labor Radicalism and Politics in Gilded Age New York City," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1995), 326.

[38] Paul Goldberger, *The City Observed: New York.* (New York: Vantage Books, 1979), 91.

importance as a gathering place for "numerous meetings of Anarchists, Socialists, and 'Wobblies' (members of the Industrial Workers of the World)." Following the financial crisis of October 1929, the Square became the meeting place for the jobless. "On March 6, 1930, the largest gathering ever held in Union Square occurred: more than thirty-five thousand unemployed workers and sympathizers crowded around a number of speakers' stands ... This mass meeting ushered in a new period in the history of labor demonstrations in Union Square."[39]

Although Union Square today is not as active on the labor scene as in years past, its labor history makes it clear that it belongs to the working people of New York and the nation.

[39] Federal Writers' Project, *New York City Guide*, 198.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):
___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
_X_ Local Government
_X_ University: New York University, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 8.6

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

18 585250 4509750

Verbal Boundary Description: See attached map.

Beginning on the south side of East 14th Street at the point where it is intersected by University Place, continuing north along the west side of Union Square West to the north side of East 17th Street and continuing in an easterly direction to the east side of Park Avenue South, then along the east side of Union Square East, continuing south to where it joins Fourth Avenue, then continuing west on the south side of East 14th Street to the point of beginning. The boundary extends to the outside curbs of the streets mentioned within the prescribed bounds. Thus, the entire streets around the Square are considered as contributing and together with the park are counted as one site. Included as contributing objects to the National Historic Landmark are the following works of art located within the park: Equestrian statue of George Washington by Henry Kirke Brown, Lincoln Statue by Henry Kirke Brown, Lafayette Statue by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, and the James Fountain, "Mother and Children," by Karl Adolf Donndorf.

Boundary Justification:

The above boundaries have been arrived at by carefully considering the historic scene as represented in the lithograph reproduced in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* September 16, 1882, and comparing it with the present scene. Of primary consideration was the general character of the Square in 1882 and the degree to which the present environment suggests the historic character. It is especially important to include the streets surrounding the Square within the boundary, because it was on the streets that the parade of September 5, 1882 occurred. The statues noted above are included within the boundary because they were part of the scene in 1882 and because they represent the use of the Park as a place to commemorate national figures. Features within Union Square Park which are noncontributing in the NHL nomination because they were developed well after the historic period are: the bandstand at the north end of the park, the subway kiosks and entrances, the Anthony de Francisci commemorative Liberty Pole, and a World War II memorial.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: John W. Bond, Historical Consultant

Telephone: (609)-424-4653

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