

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
ERegistration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Arlington Cemetery, 1620 Cove Road.  not for publication  
city or town Pennsauken Township  vicinity  
state New Jersey code 034 county Camden code 007 zip code 08110

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this  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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  See continuation sheet for additional comments.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet for additional comments.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
2	0	objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Monument/Marker

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Monument/ Marker

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_

walls \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other STONE; granite, marble

CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
[X] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
[X] C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
[X] F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1906 - 1968

Significant Dates

1906
1952

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Peter J. McGuire

Cultural Affiliation

Not applicable

Architect/Builder

Guarante, John J., sculptor

Primary location of additional data

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Name of Property

Camden, New Jersey  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of property** .27 acres

### Latitude/Longitude References

(Place additional Latitude/Longitude references on a continuation sheet.)

1 39.977693, -75.05819 [gravestone] 3  
2 39.967396, -75.058106 [statue] 4

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Robert Shinn, Treasurer (CCHS) author; Robert Fisher-Hughes PHS) contributor.  
organization Camden County (CCHS) and Pennsauken Historical (PHS) Societies date 4/13/2018  
street & number 10 White Oak Court telephone 856-428 8672  
city or town Cherry Hill state NJ zip code 08034

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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## Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name StoneMor Partners L.P. (Jane Johnson, Admin. Asst.)  
street & number 3600 Horizon Blvd., Suite 100 Telephone 215 826 2812  
City or town Treose state PA zip code 19053

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 1

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## DESCRIPTION

### Summary

The Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite are located in the southeast section of Arlington Cemetery at 1620 Cove Road, Pennsauken, Camden County, New Jersey. The Gravesite marker, a three-stage granite family headstone, was installed in 1906. It marks the graves of Peter J. McGuire, his wife, his son, his three daughters, and his son-in-law. The Memorial is separate from, but within eyesight of, the Gravesite (Photo 1).

Constructed in 1962, the Memorial and its precinct is defined by a circular paved roadway crossed by three concrete sidewalks oriented in a "T" shape that meet at a circle that surrounds a sculpture of Peter J. McGuire. The marble sculpture of McGuire stands on top of a three-stage pedestal. The colonnade consists of six Grecian Doric columns within a paneled pilaster frame. The memorial features a three-part entablature of architrave, frieze and cornice of the classical portico.

### Setting: Arlington Cemetery

The Arlington Cemetery is bordered by Cove and River Roads, Bethel Avenue, and the Bethel Memorial Park burial ground on the north side of Westfield Avenue. The Arlington Cemetery is less than a mile from the Delaware River. Established in 1901, the cemetery is located on a former Native American hunting ground. Bethel Memorial Park burial ground opened in 1842 under the auspices of the Bethel Methodist Church.

Arlington Cemetery has a Masonic Section, a Veterans Section, and a Community Mausoleum. While the Cemetery itself does not appear to have potential for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, one of its two mausoleums, designed in the Egyption Revival style and built in 1929, may be individually eligible under Criterion C as an example of its architectural style.<sup>1</sup>

Arlington Cemetery has more than 60 dogwood trees (*Cornus florida*) scattered throughout the grounds and several unusual purple beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*). The cemetery features a well tended lawn.

A green sign adjacent Cove Road and the Cemetery's office at the Cove Road entrance near Pleasant Avenue indicates that the Peter J. McGuire, the Father of Labor Day, is buried there (Photo 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Marcopul, Katherine, Letter dated August 11, 2017 to Robert A. Shinn on "Certificaton of Eligibility" for the Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 2

## McGuire Grave

The grave marker consists of three vertical stages topped by a Greek cross (Photo 3).

The base of the monument, a square, steeled slab of gray granite, is carved with the following names and birth and death dates of McGuire's second wife and his son (Photo 4):

“CHRISTINA I. MCGUIRE  
1865 – 1919  
PETER J. MCGUIRE JR  
1889 – 1938

The base has a beveled upper surface to meet the second stage. The second stage, with its polished granite surface, features a clipped corner, frosted panel with “McGuire” spelled out in slightly raised block letters (Photo 4). The die of the monument rises from the beveled top of the second stage. This polished granite block is dominated by the central shield of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters (Photo 5). The shield depicts three carpenter tools: a rule hinged in the middle, a compass, and a jack plane. The rule is inscribed with “*Labor omnia*” with “*vincit*” in a connecting arc. These Latin words translate to “Labor Conquers All Things.” A narrow carved horizontal band flanks the upper portion of the shield and a second, narrow carved, horizontal band marks the top of the die. Between the two bands is a carving indicating that McGuire was “founder of the U.B. of C & J of America” (the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America). This carving is flanked by branches of laurel leaves, a motif that is carried around all four sides of the monument. Beneath the shield is a carving indicating that McGuire was “ALSO FATHER OF LABOR DAY.”

A steeled bed molding tops the die and is surmounted by an apex crown interrupted in the center by a polished granite block carved with:

P. J. MCGUIRE  
BORN JULY 6, 1852  
DIED FEB. 18, 1906

This block has a beveled top upon which rises a granite polished Greek cross with terminal buds and an aureole (Photo 6). A diamond-shaped panel is placed at the cross of the stem and arms of the cross. This panel is inscribed with “IHS,” a monogram reference to Jesus Christ, alluding to his crucifixion.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 3

On the rear (east face) of the monument beneath a large carved "M" are carved the names of others McGuire family members (Photo 7) buried at the McGuire Gravesite. The texts read as follows from top to bottom:

George F. Caya  
1879-1961  
Kathryn C. Caya  
1887-1962  
E. Lillian McGuire  
1886 – 1963  
Myrtle F. McGuire  
1890 – 1952

### McGuire Memorial

The memorial, located in the northeast portion of the cemetery, is sited at the east end of a paved roadway that takes the form of an elongated oval. The memorial precinct is defined by a circular paved roadway. Extending from this roadway are three concrete sidewalks, one extending northeast from the southwest side of the circle, a second extending northwest from the southeast side of the circle, and a third extending southeast from the northwest side of the circle. These sidewalks, oriented in a "T" shape meet at a circle that surrounds a sculpture of Peter McGuire (Photo 8). The monument is set on a circular concrete base in the middle of a mulched island planted with low ornamental shrubs.

The plinth of the monument is divided into three vertical stages (Photo 9). The lowest stage is marked by blank rectangular panels on all four sides and is crowned by a beveled top. The die of the plinth is a stone block, square in cross section with segmental arch clipped corners (Photo 10). The front face of the die is carved with:

PETER J. MCGUIRE

July 6, 1852

February 18, 1906

The statue base consists of a smaller stone block, square in cross section, with arched, clipped corners. The Cherokee Georgia marble sculpture of McGuire, which stands six feet tall, depicts him with his proper left leg slightly forward and slightly bent at the knee (Photo 10). His proper left arm is bent at the elbow with his hand in his waistcoat pocket, while his proper right arm is bent at the elbow with his forearm draped horizontally across his chest. McGuire is dressed in a mourning coat and his visage stares straight ahead into the distance (Photo 11).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 4

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The statue is on axis with the center of a segmental arched colonnade which forms its backdrop (Photo 12). The colonnade is slightly raised on three low stone steps. An inscription on the face of the middle step reads (Photo 13):

ERECTED BY UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS OF AMERICA, 1952.

The colonnade consists of six Grecian Doric columns fabricated with entasis placed in antis within a paneled pilaster frame. The frieze above the pilasters features wreaths on both the face and sides in low relief (Photo 14). The pilasters also feature the shield depicting three carpenter tools: a rule hinged in the middle, a compass, and a jack plane (Photo 15). The rule is inscribed with "*Labor omnia*" with "*vincit*" in a connecting arc.

The memorial features a three-part entablature of architrave, frieze and cornice but lacks the decorative elements (guttae and triglyphs) of the classical portico (Photo 12). Instead, the frieze forms a continuous band and is carved with:

IN MEMORY OF PETER J. MCGUIRE FOUNDER OF UBC AND FATHER OF LABOR DAY.

### Site history and current condition

No alterations or modifications were undertaken on the McGuire Gravesite during the period of significance (1906 – 1952) or on the Memorial during its period of significance (1952 and 1967). Additional McGuire family members were buried at the gravesite subsequent to McGuire's death in 1906 and their names and birth and death dates added to the McGuire headstone.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America commissioned M.C. Lyons and Sons of Camden, New Jersey, to design, construct, and, in 1906, to install the granite gravestone that currently stands on McGuire's gravesite.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America commissioned John J. Gurantee Studio of Philadelphia to design the Cherokee Georgia marble McGuire Memorial which was installed and unveiled near the gravesite on August 9, 1952.

The landscape characteristics, physical features, and overall layout and visual appearance of the McGuire Memorial and Gravesite reflect a very high degree of overall integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. The sculptural representations of labor and union themes associated with McGuire's career as an effective labor leader and organizer that embellish the memorial and gravesite are intact and well preserved.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 1

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### Summary

The Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for their associations with Peter J. McGuire, a nationally recognized labor leader. They also meet the requirements of Criteria Consideration C for graves and Criteria Consideration F for the Memorial. McGuire was a figure of major importance in the area of labor history having successfully advocated for an eight-hour work day and has been credited as the father of Labor Day. McGuire founded and led the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and co-founded and helped lead the American Federation of Labor. Because almost all of McGuire's homes, offices, and sites of significant public demonstrations have been obliterated and the one or two remaining home sites were likely short-term rented domiciles, McGuire's gravesite is the only site that retains both the necessary direct association with McGuire as a person of national stature and the high level of integrity required for listing on the National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore it meets the requirements of Criterion Consideration C. The Memorial has been the site of Labor Day commemorations honoring McGuire's contributions to improving the working conditions of his fellow trade unionists since its erection in 1952 by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (such events had previously been focused on the gravesite). Therefore, McGuire's Memorial meets Criteria Consideration F.

### History

#### Peter J. McGuire Summary<sup>1</sup>

Peter J. McGuire (1852 – 1906) was a figure of transcendent national significance in the labor history of the United States. He joined the Cabinet Makers Union of New York in 1872. Recognizing the need for one international union of woodworkers McGuire called for and led a convention in Chicago in 1881 that formed the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (Brotherhood), which elected him its first general secretary and retained him in that position until 1901. McGuire probably did more than anyone to convince skeptical, locally minded union activists that a national labor federation was not only necessary but also possible. He co-founded the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Union (FOTLU) and later helped reorganized it into the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in which he served secretary and vice president between 1886 and 1900.

McGuire worked tirelessly to keep the carpenter's union alive in its early years. His efforts led to a doubling of carpenters' wages. In 1882 he proposed that "one day in the year be designated as Labor Day" --- a lasting and

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<sup>1</sup> This section is taken in part directly from Robert Fisher-Hughes' article, "The Father of Labor Day And His Pennsauken Monument." September 6, 2015, available on the website <http://allaroundpennsauken.com/>; Corotis, A. Charles and Charles W. Phillips. *The Life Story of a Forgotten Giant*. Camden, NJ: Memorial Committee of the Central Labor Union of Camden County and Vicinity, 1946; and Peter J. McGuire's unpublished *Diary*. c. 1881.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 2

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historical memorial to all workers. States first adopted his proposal to create a Labor Day holiday. In 1894, Congress passed an act adopting the first Monday in September as a national holiday. McGuire successfully led the fight for the eight-hour work day in 1890. He built his union membership to more than 167,000 members by the end of 1903 to become one of the world's largest trade unions.

McGuire was a remarkable figure, active in most of the significant events of the American labor and socialist movements of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. His list of accomplishments includes: leader of the demonstrations of the unemployed in New York from 1873-74; foremost English-speaking orator of the socialist parties of the 1870s; founder of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters; co-founder and high ranking officer of the American Federation of Labor; outstanding organizer and leader of the eight-hour day movement of 1886 and 1890; and claimant to the title "Father of Labor Day."

**Peter J. McGuire Narrative**

While some accounts state that Peter J. McGuire was born in Dublin, Ireland,<sup>2</sup> most historians state he was born in New York City on July 6, 1852.<sup>3</sup> In 1956, McGuire's grandson said McGuire was born in New York, not Ireland.<sup>4</sup> McGuire's Department of State passport, issued August 26, 1881, indicated that McGuire was thirty years old and a United States citizen.

McGuire grew up in the midst of rampant industrialization in New York City. From long working hours for low wages, to child labor and unsafe working conditions, the lack of collective bargaining and protective regulations made the post-Civil War period an era of despair and struggle for American workers. McGuire described the desperate living conditions of his Seventeenth Ward before a congressional committee:

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<sup>2</sup> Peter's birthplace has been disputed. Philadelphia newspapers covering the Labor Day gravesite ceremonies during the 1930's called him the "Immigrant lad." The following documents stated he was born in Dublin or Ireland: The "Golden Anniversary" brochure for the September 4, 1944 Labor Day ceremony; a *New York Times* September 5, 1950 Labor Day article; an article titled "Wolverton Offers Tribute in House to Peter McGuire." *Courier-Post*. Sept. 6, 1950; an article titled "E. Camden Low-Rent Project Honors McGuire, Father of Labor Day." *Courier Post*. February 29, 1952; the American Embassy in London's August 27, 1952 Labor Day News Bulletin; and an article titled "Peter McGuire, Labor Day Founder." *Courier Post*. July 26, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> A letter from George Pearlman to Iris Rossell dated October 26, 1970 states that Pearlman was unable to locate Peter McGuire's baptismal or birth certificates.

<sup>4</sup> Stewart, Lee. "100,000 Request First Day Issue of McGuire Labor Day Stamps." *Courier Post*. August 21, 1956. p. 12. Vincent Caya, sought to clear up the many errors concerning his grandfather in a 1956 interview. He said, "My grandfather was born in New York, not Ireland. Caya also said that the story that his grandfather died with but two cents in his pocket is a myth, and that while the family was not rich, his mother has told him that they were not penniless. He said McGuire came to Camden in 1892 when the AFL headquarters was established in Philadelphia by his good friend, Samuel Gompers."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 3

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Look at this city, with its long rows of tenement barracks, with its working people shrinking back into alleys and back lanes and huddled together into damp cellars and basements. In the 17<sup>th</sup> ward of this city the average space of land occupied by each inhabitant is 9 ½ feet square but little more than a living grave – filth, foul air abounding, the sunshine of heaven denied them, crowded and packed together; such conditions have been more destructive to human life than even war itself and all its horrors. In these tenements of the city, 28,000 children are born every year, 10,100 die annually, and thousands are sent to prison, and yet the majority of these people have paid by way of rent enough to purchase for themselves, not only one house, but several...<sup>5</sup>

McGuire attended parochial school and went to work at age eleven when his father enlisted in the Union Army in 1862. He took on a variety of jobs: hawking newspapers, shining shoes, and cleaning stores. In 1865, at age thirteen, he settled into a regular job as an errand boy at Lord and Taylor's department store when his father returned from the Army to his job as a Lord and Taylor porter.

McGuire attended evening high school and classes and lectures at the Cooper Institute, or Union, as it was commonly called. Cooper Union was a meeting place as much as a center for continuing education and was a hub for radical and reform movements. McGuire studied philosophy, history, and economics there. He was a member of the Rising Star Debating Society at Cooper Union where he met Samuel Gompers, who was to work with him years later in founding the American Federation of Labor.

A second institution also figured prominently in McGuire's education: the Tenth Ward Hotel, the weekly meeting place of Section 1 of the International Workingman's Association (IWA) and the center of socialism in America in the early 1870s when McGuire joined. Though not yet twenty, McGuire became a vociferous member of a new Section 9, one of two new "American" sections of the IWA, whose leading spokesman was the American socialist and leader of the painters, Theodore Banks.

### **Cabinet maker – Eight-hour day marcher**

On July 8, 1869, seventeen years old Peter McGuire began an apprenticeship as a cabinet maker at the Haines Piano Company<sup>6</sup> in New York City and became a member of the Cabinet Makers Union.<sup>7</sup>

In 1871 McGuire helped organize and marched alongside twenty-five thousand workers who paraded in the city for eight-hours advocating the eight-hour work day and ending up at a mass meeting at the Cooper Union on September 13.<sup>8</sup> It was really a strike as much as a parade because it was held on Wednesday.

McGuire lettered the banners used in the parade which read:

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<sup>5</sup> Lyon, David Nicholas, *The World of P. J. McGuire: A Study of the American Labor Movement, 1870-1890*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1972. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1972. 8.

<sup>6</sup> The company's shops were located from 330 to 342 Second Avenue, New York City, at the time of his employment.

<sup>7</sup> Brooks, Thomas R. *The Road to Dignity*. New York: Atheneum, 1981. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Watts, Theodore F. *The First Labor Day Parade*. Silver Spring, MD: Phoenix Rising, 1983. 9. "Probably 25,000 was claimed in the article "Workingmen. Immense Demonstration of the Workingmen of New York." *Irish World*. September 23, 1871. *The New York Times*, "The Working Man," on September 14, 1871 claimed an actual count of 8,000 workers.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 4

“Peaceably if we can; forcibly if we must.”

“Eight-hours for work; eight-hours for sleep; eight-hours for natural improvement.”

“The NEXT Governor WILL enforce the 8 hour law!”

“No more talk; we mean business!”<sup>9</sup>

Speakers demanded enforcement of the 1868 eight-hour federal law on government funded projects and demanded the government should operate all coal mines, railroads, canals, gas works, steamships and telegraphs.

While the demonstration did not win enforcement of the federal eight-hour law,<sup>10</sup> it was the boldest action American organized labor had taken and was perhaps a model for marches of the next decade, including the September 5, 1882, demonstrations (Historic Image 1). Basic iconographic motifs were established in this parade: the distinctive clothing;<sup>11</sup> badges and rosettes; large, horse-drawn displays; flags; banners; and signs and slogans – all dutifully reported by the press.

McGuire participated in another eight-hour demonstration on June 10, 1872, that included 2,000 piano makers and cabinet makers (Historic Image 2). Also held on a Wednesday, which probably reduced the turnout, 5,000 people paraded and carried the same slogan on a caisson as they had in 1871. The following slogans were carried on color transparencies supported with a wooden frame:

The Piano-Maker for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and the Moral Elevation of Mankind

Those Who Would Be Free Themselves Must Strike the Blow

No Compromise

Eight-hours Was the Demand<sup>12</sup>

Years later McGuire remarked that the demonstrations of 1871 and 1872 convinced him of the value of a militant labor movement.

McGuire quit his job at Haines Piano in October 1873 due to a salary reduction.<sup>13</sup> In November 1873 McGuire found work learning the plywood trade with Bloomfield & Otis Company at the onset of the Panic of 1873.

<sup>9</sup> Corotis, A. Charles. *op.cit.* 9

<sup>10</sup> Congress passed an eight-hour law for laborers and mechanics employed by the Federal Government on June 25, 1868.

<sup>11</sup> For example, painters wore white canvas uniforms trimmed in red. The “Peaceably if we can; forcibly if we must” motto was on a red banner on the caisson of a brass cannon pulled by the painters.

<sup>12</sup> Watts, Theodore F. *The First Labor Day Parade*. Silver Spring, MD: Phoenix Rising, 1983. 15

<sup>13</sup> McGuire, Peter J. *Diary*. 1. Corotis, A. Charles. *op.cit.* contradicts the *Diary* stating McGuire quit his job at Haines in 1871.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 5

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For the next six years workers suffered to an extent that was not matched until the Great Depression of the 1930's.<sup>14</sup> Production ground to a standstill as unemployment skyrocketed. At a December 1873 meeting of workers at the Cooper Institute, an investigative committee reported that there were 110,000 people in New York City without any reliable means for earning a living and that of the 100,000 women who live by manual labor, 38,000 were employed at the low average of \$3.44 per week.<sup>15</sup>

Section 9 of the IWA and other American radicals led the mass movement of the unemployed in New York City in the winter of 1873-74. Toward the end of November 1873 they visited the legislature at Albany seeking state assistance and later met with New York City Mayor William Havemeyer. Their requests for relief for the poor were not addressed.

McGuire got bad news on December 5, 1873. He became one more number on the rolls of the tens of thousands of unemployed workers in New York City and remained out of work until August 1874.<sup>16</sup>

After suffering the exasperation of a second useless lobbying trip to Albany, the leaders called a mass meeting at Cooper Institute for December 11, 1873. One leader roused the audience by shouting from the rostrum, "we will not eat the bread of idleness but demand work and pay for our work."<sup>17</sup> The meeting resolved to form a Committee of Public Safety which McGuire, just twenty-one, joined.<sup>18</sup>

McGuire's campaign as a street corner orator began immediately. Outside in the snow after the meeting adjourned, McGuire harangued the crowd. "When we assume control of all public works," he assured his listeners, "there will be no need for charity."<sup>19</sup> McGuire spoke every night on soap boxes in the vacant lots of his neighborhood, urging his fellow citizens to demand work or relief and urging the city government to provide jobs for the unemployed on public works and to declare a moratorium on rent relief.<sup>20</sup> His forceful and dynamic speaking style drew crowds and attention. Desperation mounted. Rallies swelled in size and became more frequent. McGuire churned out handbills and flyers between demonstrations.

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<sup>14</sup> The Panic of 1873 and the subsequent depression were caused by post-Civil War inflation, speculative investments in railroads, demonetization of silver, the Franco-Prussian War, and a drain on New York City bank reserves from September to October from \$50 million to \$17 million caused in part by the failure of the Jay Cooke bank. By November fifty five railroads had failed and another sixty went bankrupt within a year. Eighteen thousand businesses failed between 1873 and 1875. Unemployment peaked in 1878 at 8.25 percent. Building construction was halted, wages were cut, real estate values fell and corporate profits vanished. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panic\\_of\\_1873](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panic_of_1873)

<sup>15</sup> Watts, Theodore F., *op. cit.* 17

<sup>16</sup> McGuire, Peter J. *op.cit.* 3

<sup>17</sup> Lyon, David. *op. cit.* 26

<sup>18</sup> The Committee, the umbrella organization that coordinated demonstrations for public relief in the winter of 1873-74, included trade unionists, Knights of Labor, and Socialists and reformers. It was modeled after the Committee of Public Safety in France set up in 1793.

<sup>19</sup> Lyon, David, *op.cit.* 27

<sup>20</sup> O'Donnell, L.A. "Labor Day Salute. Peter J. McGuire: Architect of the House of Labor." Reprint from unattributed publication in Rossell Family files.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 6

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## Tompkins Square Park

McGuire had become chairman of the Committee of Public Safety by January 1874. When New York City officials ignored the Committee's demands for public relief and the suspension of rent, workers planned a march to City Hall. On January 8, however, McGuire did not lead the march to City Hall as he feared a riot would result. Instead, he led the crowd onto the parade ground at Tompkin's Square where he gave an eloquent address presenting a complete program for providing relief to the unemployed. He said the government had a direct responsibility to suspend rent and provide employment on public works immediately.

Press attacks on McGuire intensified after his speech. "When a man begins to talk about the suspension of house rent, he is no longer a man to be argued with but to be turned over to the police; such a man is McGuire," the *New York World* concluded. One newspaper suggested that "the police should crack the skulls of the committee of public safety like walnuts."<sup>21</sup>

On January 10, McGuire led a sit-in at Police Commission to obtain a parade permit to march on City Hall. Commissioner Gardner asked McGuire if he was a communist. McGuire replied that he was not. Gardner announced that he had talked with McGuire's father and that his father had said not only that Peter was a communist, but also "a miserable loafer who preferred living off his family to working."<sup>22</sup> McGuire, according to reports, wept at this. Broken down in a combination of sorrow and rage, he told Gardner that he "was no gentlemen to meddle in family affairs." He also said that if his father had said so then he was in fact a communist. The verbal back and forth became a heated exchange from which McGuire would only leave at the insistence of his friends.<sup>23</sup>

This incident, one of his biographers wrote, marked a point of no return for the whole future of McGuire's frenetic and unusual career.<sup>24</sup>

His father's betrayal shook McGuire, even more so when, on the following Sunday, January 11, from the steps of the parish church, his father denounced him again.

On January 12, the Committee on Public Safety sent a telegram to New York Governor Dix requesting a parade permit. Dix refused. Police superintendent Matsell rescinded the permit for a meeting in Tompkins Square the night and morning of Jan 12 -13. The *New York Times* said this was a wise decision. It had branded the group

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<sup>21</sup> *New York World*, January 10, 1874 and *New York Herald*, January 11, 1874, as cited in Lyon, *op. cit.* 30.

<sup>22</sup> Lyon, *op. cit.*, 31

<sup>23</sup> *New York World*, January 13, 1874.

<sup>24</sup> Lyon, *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 7

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"communists."<sup>25</sup> Senior members of the labor movement tried to stop the demonstration to avoid possible bloodshed. But Peter McGuire said, "No. We will hold it at 11.A.M. as set. This is a public square. We are the public."<sup>26</sup>

An extraordinary contingent of police began surrounding the square starting at 6 AM. Roughly 1,600 policemen, both mounted and on foot, were stationed in the area. By early morning McGuire had arrived and was distributing a paper edited by Lucian Saniel, later a prominent socialist, and himself. 10 a.m., 7,000 to 10,000 workers, many of them German immigrants, had already gathered in and around Tompkins Square Park with their wives and children and were peacefully milling about.<sup>27</sup> This was the largest demonstration that New York City had ever seen.<sup>28</sup>

Around 11 a.m. a contingent of German labor revolutionaries from the Tenth Ward led by Justus Schwab arrived and unfurled several banners with militant slogans. When they started singing the *Marseillaise*, the police moved in, dispersed the crowd, and injured scores.<sup>29</sup> The police clubbed as many of the crowd as they could reach. Some of the crowd fought back attempting to defend the square. McGuire and his group were pushed back, trampled. Heads, ribs, arms were broken as mounted men charged and then wheeled into the crowd on Eighth Avenue, riding down men, women and children (Historic Image 3). Samuel Gompers narrowly avoided the attack by jumping down cellar ways. Gompers later remembered the police charge as "an orgy of brutality" that led to "a reign of terror" during which the New York police broke up even private gatherings.<sup>30</sup>

Forty-six protestors were arrested by the police, and ten were later arraigned on charges of assault and battery against police officers, aiding and inciting riot, or with charges of "meeting and talking wildly in the streets." Many demonstrators were injured, but no one died. The Committee of Safety condemned the police leader for having "charged his police upon inoffensive workingmen like so many 'bulldogs.'" Police Commissioner Abram Duryée, a Union Army general during the American Civil War, defended the use of force: "It was the most glorious sight I ever saw the way the police broke and drove the crowd. Their order was perfect as they charged with their clubs uplifted."<sup>31</sup>

McGuire went to Mayor's office and requested that he meet with demonstrators. Mayor William F. Havemeyer said he would have met if they had met peaceably in Union Square. He said the city could not furnish work to the industrious poor and suggested a plan for raising subscriptions to form a merchants and business man to help the unemployed.

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<sup>25</sup> "Defeat of the Communists: Mass Meeting and Parade Broken Up." *The New York Times*. January 14 1874.

<sup>26</sup> Corotis, A. Charles, *op. cit.* 21.

<sup>27</sup> <http://tenement-museum.blogspot.com/2011/11/occupy-wall-streets-historic-precedent.html>

<sup>28</sup> Foner, Philip S. *History of the Labor Movement in the United States Vol.2.* International Publishers Co. ,1979. 448.

<sup>29</sup> *New York Tribune*, January 14, 1874.

<sup>30</sup> Gompers, Samuel. *Seventy Years of Life and Labor.* New York City: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1925. 32-34.

<sup>31</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abram\\_Dury%C3%A9e](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abram_Dury%C3%A9e)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 8

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The police action worked, up to a point. The blood spilled in and around Tompkins Square slowed the pace of organizing, but it also had the unintended effect of galvanizing a number of young activists into a life of labor organizing. This sparked a public dialogue about police brutality, free speech, and the right to public assembly, sowing the seeds of the American labor movement.

Two weeks later the *New York Times* quoted Mrs. Charles Lilienthal, who had been an eye-witness to the riot and was "horrified" by the events. Speaking at a community meeting about the January 13 events, Lilienthal contradicted the characterization of the *Times'* prior article, asking, "What citizens were those that wanted to meet in Tompkins Square? ...they were a portion of positively our best class of citizens. They were the true tax-payers. They were working men!"<sup>32</sup>

The unemployed movement lost much momentum after the riot. The unemployment councils faded with the arrival of spring. Tompkins Square settled in the minds of labor leaders as the site of a violent attack on the young labor movement and showed that city government was willing to instigate violence against political action outside the traditional boss and party framework.<sup>33</sup> As a result of the Tompkins Square riot Gompers concluded that radicalism was not effective and impeded efforts to improve the lot of workers. Gompers noted how the "professors of radicalism concentrated all the forces of organized society against the labor movement" and began to realize the necessity of making the labor movement a force to neutralize its enemies through proper deportment and diplomatic tactics, the "labor statesmanship" of which he would become master.<sup>34</sup>

McGuire saw Tompkins Square as reason to redouble his efforts to change the system and begin a new career.

In May 1874, McGuire joined with Adolph Strasser, who was to become the head of the cigar makers' union, and other radicals, including J. G. Spreyer and Hugh McGregor, to form the Social Democratic Party of North America. The Party, an amalgamation of at least ten distinct organizations, was a dissident branch of the International Workingmen's Association which had been founded by Karl Marx along trade union lines. All the founding members agreed on the need for workers to achieve political status as they did not have a party which represented their interests. The Social Democrats, led by McGuire and Stresser, rebelled against the Marxian theory of world revolution, under central leadership. They wanted to conduct the emancipation of American labor strictly along American lines, through political as well as economic action.<sup>35</sup> Their group was under the ideological influence of Ferdinand Lasalle (rather than Karl Marx). Lasalle promoted guild socialism

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<sup>32</sup> "Mass Meeting at Cooper Institute." *The New York Times*. January 31, 1874.

<sup>33</sup> For more information on the significance of the "riot" see Gutman, Herbert G. "The Tompkins square 'Riot' in New York City on January 13, 1874: A re-examination of its causes and its aftermath." *Labor History* 6:1. 1965 and Gardner, Deborah S. "Tompkins Square: Past and Present." *The Journal of American History* 77:1. 1990.

<sup>34</sup> Gompers, Samuel, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor*. 2 Vols. New York: E.P. Dutton & company, 1925. 97-98.

<sup>35</sup> Corotis, A. Charles. *op. cit.* 8.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 9

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and the view that industry would eventually be transformed into productive associations with ownership and control by workers.<sup>36</sup>

Joining the Workingmen's Party launched McGuire on a seven year period (1874 – 1881) of campaigning for socialism. He was in fact the only English speaking organizer for the Party of North America. In December, 1874, he gave a speech to a large audience at Cooper Union and in subsequent months took the lead in presenting the case against the companies who made cigars in tenement houses. He also made clear that socialists intended to work closely with trade unions and would pursue a centralized organization in whatever way they could. McGuire called for a union in the piano making trade, in which he was employed, and agitated on behalf of a union for weavers. Unions, McGuire said, were a base for politics, not as an end in themselves, for ultimately "conditions would not be improved without political power."<sup>37</sup>

McGuire's *Diary* indicated he had four jobs in New York City between April 1874 and October :first, with Lucien Sanial on the radical newspaper *The Toiler*<sup>38</sup> from April to August 1874; second, in the ply finish trade with the Pease Piano Company at 32nd Street near 7th Avenue from August to December 1874; third, on ply finish with Goveteens on Mercer Street starting from February to June 1875; and fourth, at case making at Behr & Pecks on 30<sup>th</sup> Street from June to September 1875.

### **New Haven and the Workingmens Party**

McGuire moved to New Haven, Connecticut in October 1875. He got a job as a journeyman wood joiner in a piano factory making cases and renewed his political activity beginning a broad agitation in New England mill towns. New Haven would remain his base of operations for the next three years. While he maintained regular employment and received only expenses from his party, his career between 1875 and 1881 was primarily that of a professional reformer.

McGuire was a self-described agitator, but one who abhorred violence, secrecy, and terrorism, and who believed in a peaceful road to socialism rather than a violent revolution.

McGuire attended the Workingmens Party Unity Convention in Philadelphia on July 4, 1875. He organized the New Haven Branch of the Party (also called the "Socialist Democrats") on October 20, 1875. In November he organized an English speaking section of the Socialist Democrats in New Haven and thereafter held weekling meetings in Engine House No. 12 on George Street. McGuire was elected a delegate to the Party's December

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<sup>36</sup> Galenson, Walter. *The United Brotherhood of Carpenters: The First Hundred Years*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983. 23. LaSalle was largely responsible for the creation of the General Union of German workers, one of the earliest German labor federations.

<sup>37</sup> *Social Demokrat*, December 12, 1874 and in Lyon, op.cit. 40.

<sup>38</sup> Lucian Sanial, born in France, came to America to cover the Civil War for the Paris Times. He stayed and joined the Socialist Labor Party of America in 1877, just one year after it was created. He was a journalist and editor of a series of politically oriented newspapers, including *The Toiler*, *The Issue*, and the *Daily Telegraph*. He supported Henry George for Mayor of New York City.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 10

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1875 convention. McGuire then went on a six week tour of New England making one hundred seven speeches on behalf of socialism.

In April 1876, McGuire served as the New Haven delegate at the Party's Pittsburgh Convention. The convention chose him to be its English secretary and directed him to begin an extended western organizing tour to promote the party. During these proceedings McGuire made himself an important link between the German speaking socialists and their American comrades. During the speaking and organizing tour McGuire became close friends with Gustav Luebker, the former secretary of the German Carpenters union. The two would address meetings respectively in English and German.

McGuire made the case for the Social Democrats speaking before over 3,000 workers in Chicago's Turn Hall. He called capitalists loafers and parasites and workers slaves and described socialism as the complete reorganization of society in the interest of the working class. He said,

The capitalist tore the woman from her true duties as mother and nurse of the human race and made her that most terrible of all slaves, the slave of the machine. The capitalist tore the children from home and school to labor in factories 10 to 12 hours per day. This must be stopped and the only way to stop it is to organize and kill the growing power of capital.<sup>39</sup>

His remarks were well received and many enrolled as charter members of the English-speaking section of the Workingmens Party.

On July 19, 1876, the Union Congress of Socialists in America convened in Philadelphia. McGuire attended as a delegate of the Socialist Democratic Party of America.<sup>40</sup> Delegates representing the Illinois Workgmens Party and the remaining sections of the First International<sup>41</sup> proposed to organize a highly centralized body with a powerful executive committee and to withdraw from all election movements. The national election of 1876, with new heights of corruption in the eyes of these socialists, strongly argued for avoiding all political activities until at least November. McGuire, who sought to preserve local autonomy to participate in local elections, narrowly won an amendment to the group's constitution which would allow sections to take part in political movements with the consent of the executive board. He argued that special conditions in New Haven necessitated the clause, and such circumstances might also exist in other cities.

McGuire's evolving view of the role of trade unions also emerged at the unity conference. He successfully pushed plank eleven of the party's platform which stated: "All industrial enterprises are to be placed under the control of the government as fast as it practicable and operated by free cooperative trade unions for the good of the whole people."<sup>42</sup> At this time McGuire viewed trade unions as institutions of a future socialist state

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<sup>39</sup> Lyon, David. *op. cit.* 55

<sup>40</sup> McGuire mentions in his *Diary* that he also spent three weeks at the 1976 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia.

<sup>41</sup> The First International was founded at a mass meeting in London on September 28, 1864 under the name of the International Working Men's Association. Though Karl Marx was elected on of the 32 members of the provisional General Council and assumed a leadership position, the First International was buffeted by conflicting schools of socialist thought.

<sup>42</sup> *Workingman's party of the United States, Proceedings of the Union Congress*. Philadelphia, July 29, 20, 21, 22, 1876. 15.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 11

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and not as organizations within capitalist society which would carry on what socialists called “the economic struggle.” Trade unions would actively organize production and market goods on a cooperative basis, replacing the capitalist entrepreneur.<sup>43</sup>

After returning to New Haven, McGuire observed continuing economic depressions that would require his participation on local elections. He described the situation:

Many of the large factories are at a standstill, hundreds of able bodied persons are walking the streets idea and desperate, wages are down to zero, numerous cases of starvation are reported by the local press. The situation is appalling and calls for prompt and decisive action....<sup>44</sup>

While he declined the Workingmen’s Party nomination for the Connecticut Legislature, he responded to an appeal for moral and financial support from the iron molders who led a strike at the J.B. Sargent iron works against wage reductions of 20-40 percent. In McGuire’s view, Sargent, one of the “meanest monopolist in Connecticut” had been elected New Haven Selectman by means of his wealth. The strike had turned into an agitation against the reelection of Sargent and in favor of a repeal of the conspiracy law which Sargent was using against the strikers.

The Workingman’s party was not successful in the New Haven election, but McGuire concluded that its effort had been useful: “By means of the election campaign we have done more to spread our principles than all our agitation for one whole previous year” and that the election activities, such as the distribution of flyers and poll watching, had a salutary effect on the workers: “Indeed it was a grand sign to see our men standing all day wet and hungry, without pay or a cent in their pockets nor place of shelter, fighting for principles against the paid wire pullers and ward bombers.”<sup>45</sup>

McGuire sold labor papers and socialist tracts from August 1876 to February 22, 1877, when he began a five week walking and talking tour of New England, returning to New Haven on March 18, 1877. He returned to New Bedford, Massachusetts, a week later to assist carpenters at the Wamsutta Knitting Mill and Works by chairing a meeting in which the workers resolved to continue a strike that had begun in February to stop a 9 cent reduction in wages.<sup>46</sup> McGuire urged the men to stay put until the mills crumbled to dust. He suggested that the company treated its horses better than its workers and that the proposed wage reduction would not have even been in the minds of the mill owners had the workers been organized in a national union.<sup>47</sup>

McGuire went to work at the New Haven Folding Chair Company on June 6, 1877, leaving on August 5, 1878, after a little over a year. He went to Cincinnati, Ohio<sup>48</sup> on September 2, 1877, to engage in six weeks of local

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<sup>43</sup> Lyon, David. *op. cit.* 60.

<sup>44</sup> *National Labor Tribute*. September 9, 1876.

<sup>45</sup> Lyon, *op.cit.* 67.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20151122/NEWS/151129887>

<sup>47</sup> Lyon, David. *op. cit.* 70

<sup>48</sup> McGuire’s Diary states that he visited Bettie Shoemaker while in Cincinnati. They had met in May 1877, but Shoemaker had moved to Cincinnati in August. The Diary states that he “broke off with Bettie” on November 22, 1877.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 12

---

political campaigning, making one hundred sixty one speeches and getting 9,076 votes on the Workingmen's Ticket (Historic Image 4).

Members of the Workingmen Party nominated McGuire for a variety of offices in New Haven on their ticket between October and December 1877. McGuire declined all these nominations. He attended the Congress of Social Democrats in Newark, New Jersey as a delegate from New Haven. The Newark congress created an independent labor party clearly distinct from the trade unions. The name Workingmens Party was dropped in favor of Socialistic Labor Party, which would later become the Socialist Labor Party.

### St. Louis

McGuire went to St. Louis, Missouri, in August 1878. The Workingmen's Party had mobilized St. Louis workers during the Great Railroad Strike of 1877,<sup>49</sup> and McGuire imagined the city would be fertile ground for organizing. He was not disappointed. Representing the local Trades and Labor Assembly, he successfully lobbied the Missouri State Legislature to enact two laws: one regulating mine ventilation, and the other, outlawing child labor.

McGuire's *Diary* states that he became acquainted with Maggie V. Richardson on January 28, 1878, and married her on October 3, 1878.<sup>50</sup> He arrived in St. Louis with his new family on October 13, 1878. Richardson had a five year old daughter, Sadie. McGuire noted in his *Diary* that Maggie was born on "Dec. 5, 1849 (2 years & 7 mo.s & 1 day older)."

McGuire spent three years in St. Louis. He got a job in a St. Louis furniture factory on October 23, 1878. He went to work in the varnish room of a cooperative furniture factor in St. Louis on January 23, 1879.

From February 25 to May 17, 1879, McGuire was a delegate of St. Louis Trade Assembly in the Missouri Legislature. He convinced the legislature to establish a State Bureau of Labor Statistics and was subsequently appointed Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau. He soon grew impatient with the Bureau's limited authority. Conflict with his supervisor heightened his dissatisfaction with watching labor struggles from a distance. After six months he quit and returned to work promoting trade unionism and fighting for the eight-hour day.

In May 1879, McGuire organized an eight-hour day parade in St. Louis. On July 4, he addressed a crowd of 20,000 on the same subject. Four days later he spoke at a mass rally in Chicago. The eight-hour day theme became a pivotal issue in the collective bargaining demands of carpenter unions.

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<sup>49</sup> When the St. Louis Workingman's Party led 500 men to join 1,000 E. St. Louis railroad worker on strike, it catalyzed labor unrest with thousands of workers in several industries to strike for the eight-hour day and a ban on child labor. This was the first general strike in the United States.

<sup>50</sup> McGuire's *Diary* was written in 1881. On its last page McGuire (or someone else) noted several dates related to Maggie V. Richardson. Above her name he wrote "Married October 1877" then scratched out 1877 and wrote under it "3-1876."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 13

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McGuire joined the Greenback Labor Party in 1880 and was a delegate of the St. Louis socialists to the Chicago Greenback national convention and the Missouri Greenback state convention.<sup>51</sup> While nominated to run for Secretary of State, McGuire declined.

In October 1880, the carpenters organized a union in St. Louis, and McGuire resumed carpentry at Filley's Foundry. "Exposed as I am all day the biting cold is pretty hard on me," McGuire described his work that winter of 1881. "We work 120 feet from the ground and are pretty well exposed, building a self supporting roof. The arctic weather lately kept us idle for several days, but I keep the job because it will last until summer and it pays \$2.50 per day of nine hours."<sup>52</sup>

While working his wintry job McGuire helped fellow carpenter German-American socialist Gustav Luebker nurture three branches of the St. Louis carpenter's union. McGuire was elected secretary of the local carpenters union strike committee and presided over negotiations that successfully avoided a strike with 112 firms by obtaining a rate of \$3.00 a day for ten hours work and an eight-hour Saturdays. The negotiations also ended piece work and stopped such trade abuses as the "Jerry"<sup>53</sup> building, bonus work, and pay day uncertainty.<sup>54</sup>

The carpenter's strike in St. Louis was McGuire's first positive experience with trade unions. Immediately after he carpenter's strike conclude the street railway workers walked out in protest against hard working conditions (18 hour days when they had agreed to 10). On April 19, 1881, McGuire spoke to a meeting of drivers advising them to organize and to appeal their just cause to an enlightened public. He said people will rather walk than countenance their oppression. On April 23, the street railway workers struck for shorter hours and at first had strong public support.

After a few days, attitudes towards the strike changed and McGuire was attacked as an agitator who kept the strikers from accepting the railway companies' offers. Some violence ensued when strikebreakers were employed. Deadlock set in. Missouri's Governor mobilized troops to protect drivers who had returned to work and came to St. Louis. McGuire assured the governor that there would be no violence, but the militia paraded two Gatling guns on caissons around their encampment.

McGuire was arrested on April 28, 1881, without warrant and charged with incitement to riot, with carrying a pistol, and with threatening a man.<sup>55</sup> He was released on a \$500 bail bond supplied by the St. Louis Trades Assembly. The day after McGuire got out of jail the St. Louis Trades Assembly elected him as its secretary .

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<sup>51</sup> The name referred to the non-gold backed paper money known as "greenbacks" issued by the North during the American Civil War. The party opposed the return to a bullion-based monetary system favoring continued use of unbacked currency to better foster business and assist farmers by raising prices and making debts easier to pay.

<sup>52</sup> Brooks, Thomas R., *op. cit.* 21.

<sup>53</sup> Pejorative for bad or defective.

<sup>54</sup> A *Brief History of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners* sheet in Rossell family collection.

<sup>55</sup> The charges against McGuire were later dismissed after many witnesses testified that McGuire had not threatened to throw a brick at the alleged victim.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 14

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McGuire and his socialist comrade Gustav Luebert had good reason to believe the St. Louis carpenters strike was a success. Letters came from all cities asking him to organize a national union. The high wages that prevailed in St. Louis encouraged carpenters from other states to flood the city and threaten the gains the local organizers had won. This made the need for a national union clear.

McGuire saw developments in the trade through the eyes of an experienced organizer. He believed that workers could only combat powerlessness through organization. In late April, McGuire and Luebert formed a provisional committee to arrange for a national convention and laid plans for a national newspaper. McGuire issued a call for action in the first edition of *The Carpenter* newspaper he wrote and published in St. Louis on May Day (May 1) 1881:

For years the carpenters of the whole country have been disorganized and without any common understanding. The 300,000 men of the trade have been at the mercy of a few thousand contractors and boss builders. . . In the present age there is no hope for workingmen outside of organization. Without a trades union, the workman meets the employer at a great disadvantage. The capitalist has the advantage of past accumulations; the laborer, unassisted by combination, has not.

## National carpenters union

McGuire had the credibility needed to call for a national union. His leadership in the Workingmen's Party, in the St. Louis Trades Assembly, and in a successful St. Louis carpenters strike made him the country's best known organizer of carpenters, though he was still just twenty nine.

McGuire extolled the benefits of the union and publish its successes in *The Carpenter*. The first issues were only four pages long, with a circulation of one thousand. About half of each issue was written in German, because of the existence of many German-American trade unionists.<sup>56</sup> *The Carpenter* became the official publication of the union, keeping its members updated on relevant legislation and the activities of local unions. For over a hundred years, from its beginning up until 1990, *The Carpenter* was a monthly publication.<sup>57</sup> When in early 1882 McGuire and the union were penniless, McGuire had to borrow \$30 from a friend to print the March issue. McGuire dreaded the collapse of his organization and especially its newspaper. He wrote to the first General President Gabriel Edmonston:

We must never think of giving up *The Carpenter!* Rather give up anything but that. I would sell my sewing machine and mortgage everything I have before that paper goes down. It is our life, our hope, the only power to hold the unions true to each other. I will work at my trade, give up my salary, and kill myself at night to keep things going if necessary to keep up our paper.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> A portion of *The Carpenter* was published in German until World War I.

<sup>57</sup> From 1990 production gradually decreased from seven issues a year to one annual issue.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.centralsouthcarpenters.org/pdf/UBC-History.pdf>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 15

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In the spring of 1881, McGuire sent out some 500 letters to carpenter groups throughout the country calling for a new national union.<sup>59</sup> McGuire sought to regulate the flow of migrating carpenters from city to city.<sup>60</sup>

About half of the carpenter groups replied. In all, sixty-two unions with a total of 18,000 members pledged support to the idea of a national union. On August 8, 1881, thirty-six delegates from eleven cities and twelve unions with a total of 2,042 members joined McGuire in Chicago's Trades Assembly Hall to form the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.<sup>61</sup>

While local unions of carpenters had existed since the 1700s<sup>62</sup> and continued to flourish into the early nineteenth century, McGuire attempted to establish a strong national American movement to consolidate the power of the carpenters' local unions.

Over four days delegates produced a constitution and structure for a new national union, the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.<sup>63</sup> The convention was not without struggle. Half of the delegates were from Chicago and two rival Chicago unions struggled for dominance. The first, the "Benevolents," were primarily committed to providing benefits to members. They wanted a weaker national organization limited to serving as a financial clearing house for benefits. The second, the "Protectives," were more concerned with creating a mass-based union willing to engage in strikes.<sup>64</sup>

The outcome was a compromise. The Protectives got a full time paid national secretary, a strike fund, and a national system of working cards or union identification cards. The Benevolents got a low per capital tax, a weak national executive board, and a rule that strike fund disbursements would require approval by two thirds of all locals. As a consequence, for the rest of the 1880s, the national organization had little influence on the Chicago union other than through the editorials and personal visits of McGuire who the delegates had

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<sup>59</sup> Though a national union of carpenters had existed since 1865, it had ceased to have any influence on large cities, such as Chicago during the depression on the 1870s.

<sup>60</sup> Schneirov, Richard and Thomas J. Suhrbur. *Union Brotherhood, Union Town: The History Of The Carpenters' Union Of Chicago, 1863-1987*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 23.

<sup>61</sup> Galenson, Walter. *op.cit.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Just as the carpenters of later decades fought for the eight-hour day, the generation of the 1830s including Philadelphia's "Journeyman House Carpenters Association, battled for the ten-hour workday with two hours allowed for meals. Forced to work thirteen or more hours during summer, the "Six to Six" motto was the protest of carpenters and workers in many other trades against a sunup to sundown work day in the summer and a piece work system during the short daylight hours of the winter months. Originally designed in 1864 by the old National Union of Carpenters, today's United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UBC) emblem was officially adopted in 1884 by the delegates at the UBC's Fourth General Convention.

<sup>63</sup> The union was renamed the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in 1888. For the Brotherhood's summary and video of their organization's history see: <https://www.carpenters.org/about-ubc/21st-century-union/history/>. For a list of all documents available in the Brotherhood's archives at the University of Maryland see: <https://digital.lib.umd.edu/archivesum/actions.DisplayEADDoc.do?source=%252FMdU.ead.histms.0239.xml&style=ead#subseries8.2.a>

<sup>64</sup> Local 3 (Protectives) and Local 4 (Benevolents) were merged to form Local 21 under McGuire's direction in May 1882.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 16

---

elected as the Brotherhood's first general secretary at a salary of \$15 a week, the only full time position in the union.<sup>65</sup>

The founders also adopted resolutions reflecting their primary concerns. They resolved to resist the use of machinery to reduce the compensation of skilled labor by a demand for shorter hours of labor. They called for abandoning either political party and pledging support for candidates who would best represent the laboring classes. They resolved to establish employment bureaus throughout the country, recognizing the kind of problem they had experienced in St. Louis with fluctuation in the labor supply caused by itinerancy and facilitated by an expanding transportation network. They urged abolition of convict labor and the establishment of an international federation of building trades. They endorsed the newly formed Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada (FOTLU).

While McGuire had drafted the call for the first FOTLU convention,<sup>66</sup> he did not attend and went instead to Switzerland as a delegate from the Socialist Labor Party to the International Workingmen's Congress, which later became known as the Second International.<sup>67</sup> (See Historic Image 2 of P.J. McGuire taken in Zurich, Switzerland in October 1881). McGuire wanted to prevent the importation of Europeans carpenters to America to "overstock our trade, whenever our wages advance." He believed there needed to be an understanding between organized workers of all countries.

FOTLU was not very successful initially. Most national unions and Knights of Labor assemblies withdrew almost immediately. Only nineteen delegates attended the second convention and only twenty six attended the third.

When McGuire returned from Europe in the fall of 1881, he embarked on organizing, moving from city to city by train at odd hours, answering his voluminous correspondence and preparing speeches in the coach as he traveled. While the organization work of the winter of 1881-82 was a combination of reform and revolution not yet clearly differentiated from the organizational and agitation work McGuire had undertaken on behalf of the Socialist Labor party, developing a solid national trade union had its own challenges. It was hard to accumulate an adequate strike fund; work conditions varied greatly from location to location; local labor leaders had conflicting opinions on policy; more solvent unions were not enthusiastic about supporting poorer unions; and the authority to direct strikes and to administer strike funds had not been established at the Chicago convention.

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<sup>65</sup> Christie, Robert A. *Empire in Wood; A History of the Carpenters' Union*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1956. 23-25;38-43.

<sup>66</sup> The convention occurred on November 15, 1881, at Turner Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

<sup>67</sup> McGuire's August 26, 1881 US Passport states that he was thirty years old, 5 feet 8.5 inches tall, and had: high forehead, gray eyes, medium nose and mouth, small chin, blonde hair, florid complexion and an oblong face. When McGuire was twenty-eight years old he was described as a well built man, fairly tall, with red hair and "fiery" blue eyes. Brooks, Thomas R. op.cit. 21



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 17

---

## New York City – Origins of Labor Day

McGuire moved out of St. Louis in the last days of November 1881, organizing and speaking to meetings in Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia on his way to New York City..

McGuire set up the national office of the Brotherhood in New York on December 21, 1881. (The headquarters were changed every two years, from St. Louis to New York to Philadelphia to Cleveland, until it was decided to locate the national office in Philadelphia for ten years, ending in 1896.)<sup>68</sup>

The Brotherhood was getting nowhere in New York, a fact which might have had some bearing on McGuire's decision to move the national office there.<sup>69</sup> The semi-autonomous nature of the New York labor market featured many historical accommodations between master builders and journeyman, and the market's ethnic complexity promoted parochialism which worked against the acceptance of trade unions in skilled crafts. The United Order of Carpenters and Joiners, a long standing New York benevolent group, refused to have anything to do with McGuire's Brotherhood.

While labor organizations in New York City were divided and competed with each other for members and policies, the year 1882 was charged with excitement for organized workers in the city. They began the new year by packing Cooper Union in a demonstration to support Irish tenants against their British landlords on January 30. Strikes for increased wages and demonstrations for social reform soon abounded.

In March 1882, a major conflict arose between the national leaders of the largest American labor organization of the 1880s, the Knights of Labor, the Brooklyn Local Assembly 1562 of the Knights of Labor (LA 1562), and Peter J. McGuire. LA 1562 member Friedrich Cuno, with the support of the local's leadership, ordered a boycott of the Glen Cove Starch Company because one of its former employees, a man named Burke, alleged the owners were unfair employers. Several weeks later the *New York Herald* published an article Cuno wrote which depicted the Knights as a militant group. It also revealed portions of the Knight's secret rituals and activities. Terrence Powderly, the Knights' "Grand Master Workman" since 1879, reacted with a reprimand and public disclaimer of Cuno. However, after the starch company sued the Knights for Cuno's actions, Powderly offered to defend Cuno in court if he could substantiate his reasons for ordering the boycott. After meeting Cuno, Powderly concluded that Cuno was wrong and remarked, "I was never so amazed in my life why the man is insane in his antipathy to capital."<sup>70</sup>

Around this same time McGuire began attending LA 1562 meetings and advised Cuno to stand strong in the face of Powderly's suspension of Cuno. Cuno and LA 1562 attacked Powderly to try to win support in the forthcoming General Assembly of the Knights that was planned for New York in September 1882. They distributed a circular requesting a hearing and calling Powderly's charges against Cuno "trumped up." This was

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<sup>68</sup> Brooks, Thomas R. *op.cit.* 30.

<sup>69</sup> Lyon, David. *op.cit.* 165

<sup>70</sup> Lyon, David. *op.cit.* 171

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 18

---

followed by a personal attack on Powderly as “unfit to represent us” for “he is lacking in backbone” and was unwilling to support strikes.<sup>71</sup>

In 1882, the New York City Central Labor Union was a lodge of the still-secret Knights of Labor, with a progressive tailor, Robert Blissert, at its head. His right-hand man and Secretary of the CLU was Mathew Maguire, a machinist and LA 1562 member.

On May 8, 1882, while attending New York Central Labor Union (CLU) leadership meeting, McGuire earned his place in labor history.<sup>72</sup> He proposed the observance of a distinct and a new holiday --- with parades and picnics --- which would be set aside to celebrate the American worker and to celebrate the achievements of the labor movement.<sup>73</sup> He said that in his study of history he observed that in various countries the world over, many days were observed in honor of saints, soldiers, statesmen, explorers, musicians, and even poets; but nowhere in the world could be found a day celebrated in honor of those whose labor had made possible all the grandeur of civilization.<sup>74</sup> They-- the workers--were entitled to a day apart . But to get such a day, ever to get any recognition, they would have to take it.

McGuire proposed the holiday be designated for the first Monday in September because no other existing holidays were near that date, and it would come at the most pleasant season of the year, nearly midway between the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving filling in a wide gap in the chronology of holidays.<sup>75</sup>

In July the CLU formed a committee headed by Matthew Maguire to plan for a labor picnic to raise money for a workingman’s weekly paper. At the CLU meeting of August 6, 1882, Mathew Maguire read a resolution proclaiming September 5 (a Tuesday) as a general holiday for the workingmen of this city.

The parade was timed to coincide with the Sixth National Assembly of the Knights of Labor being held in New York in the Union Square area. This accounts for the presence of seventy-six delegates (almost the entire Knights of Labor leadership) representing 42,517 members on the reviewing stand.

On August 23, CLU President Robert Blissert, a New York tailor, and Peter McGuire participated in a labor parade in Providence, Rhode Island, and spoke at the post-parade picnic at nearby Rocky Point.

Parade Grand Marshall, William McCabe, outlined its goals at a CLU meeting the Sunday before the parade:

Let us offer to monopolist and their tools of both political parties such a sight as will make them think more profoundly than they have ever thought before. Let us lift the curtain and show them by this

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<sup>71</sup> Lyon, David. *op cit* 173

<sup>72</sup> Corotis, A. Charles. *op.cit.* 19.

<sup>73</sup> *The Carpenter*. October 1889. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Burke, John P., *Labor Day Address at the Grave of Peter J. McGuire, the Father of Labor Day, at Arlington Cemetery, Pennsauken, New Jersey*. September 6, 1948. Burke was the President Secretary of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulfite and Paper Mill Workers at the time.

<sup>75</sup> Brooks, Thomas R. *op.cit.* 31

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 19

---

demonstration some of the organizing work that has been going on behind the scenes during the past nine months.<sup>76</sup>

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 first Labor Day parade and celebration occurred in New York City on Tuesday, September 5, 1882.<sup>77</sup> More than 30,000 marchers participated.<sup>78</sup> Participants had to give up a day's pay in order to march, and the CLU levied a fine on non-participants.<sup>79</sup>

The parade was organized into three divisions.<sup>80</sup> 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. (Historic Image 1; reviewing stand on right side towards the middle of the image). 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.

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.

After the three divisions merged on Broadway they created quite a visual sensation, resulting in the spectacle 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

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<sup>76</sup> "Working Men on Parade." *New York Times*. September 6, 1882.

<sup>77</sup> There were earlier parades, picnics, and demonstrations of a wide assortment supporting a multitude of labor interests; therefore the grand parade up Broadway to Union Square in September 1882 was not the "first" labor day parade. Rather than just a parade involving labor representatives, this 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 Labor Day was presented to the CLU by McGuire in May 1882.

<sup>78</sup> <https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-people/peter-mcguire>

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org/labor-history-articles/first-labor-day-parade>

<sup>80</sup> For a detailed description of the parade and picnic see Watts, Theodore F. *op. cit.* and Bond, John W. *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Union Square*. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. December 9, 1997 accessible at <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/1b01b341-8fe0-48bc-853e-6d0fbfc48ea3>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 20

---

trades united in one organization," filled the sidewalks, occupied roofs, windows and even the lamp posts. One of the things which distinguished this parade from all previous parades or demonstrations involving workers was the representation of a broad range of union members and the unified front they presented. The number of participants in the parade was estimated at 10,000 to 25,000, depending upon the newspaper reporting.

Peter J. McGuire was one of the six reviewing stand members and principal speakers who addressed at the post-parade picnic, attended by 25,000 workers and their families, at Wendel's Park.<sup>81</sup> The first line of his speech: "Not in ten years have we made such a demonstration as today."<sup>82</sup> 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 a year." The festival, McGuire believed, "would not celebrate a victory or a bloody battle, but the honor of labor coming into its own."<sup>83</sup> McGuire said, "On this day the hosts of labor shout their hosannas. It is dedicated to peace, civilization and the triumph of industry. It is a demonstration of a better age, a more chivalrous time when labor shall be honored and well-rewarded."<sup>84</sup>

When the Knight's Assembly executive board later heard the previously mentioned charges against Friedrich Cuno, they expelled him. They also charged McGuire and others with instructing members of LA 1562 not to answer questions of the Knights' committee that had been charged with investigating the Cuno incident. The executive board decided to revoke the charter of LA 1562 and to resolve that McGuire, other LA 1562 members, including Mathew Maguire, were "expelled and forever debarred from membership in the Knights of Labor."<sup>85</sup>

Eight years later, McGuire wrote an article entitled "The Birth of Labor Day" in *The Carpenter* in which he indicated that *at least the timing* of the first Labor Day was part of a scheme he and other members of the LA 1562 had for getting back in the good graces of Terence Powderly, head of the Knights of Labor. He wrote:

The first inception of the Labor Day festival took place in Brooklyn in June 1882 when a meeting of Local Assembly 1562, was in progress. Some of the members fell into a chat and began recalling holidays they remembered, such as the birthdays of statesmen and soldiers, the dates of great battles, and events in the history of the republic. Suddenly one of them asked why labor should not have a holiday of its own. The idea was eagerly endorsed by everyone in the room, and a sort of informal discussion took place, resulting in a unanimous resolution that they would advocate the celebration of one day in the year to

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<sup>81</sup> Watts, Theodore F., *op.cit.* See Appendix A. for a list of union leaders and members of press that were on the reviewing stand in Union Square, 67, and Appendix B. for a list of "Speakers at the Picnic" at Wendel's Park. 71

<sup>82</sup> "The Waking Giant Monster Labor Parade and Demonstration in New York." *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*. September 16, 1882.

<sup>83</sup> Grossman, Jonathan. "Who is the Father of Labor Day?" *Labor History*. Vol. 14. No. 4 Fall 1973. 616

<sup>84</sup> Herrick, Elinor Morehouse. "The Unions' Labor Day Now Belongs to Nation." *New York Herald Tribune*. September 6, 1953. A2.

<sup>85</sup> Knights of Labor, *Proceedings of the General Assembly*, New York, NY. 1882. 279-82. McGuire had joined the Knights in 1879 while in St. Louis. He generally had supported the work of the organization as valuable propaganda, but was often critical of its leadership.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 21

---

honor the genius of industry. No time was lost in carrying out the idea. At the next meeting of the Central Labor Union, P.J. McGuire and Mathew Maguire, who were then members of Local 1562, brought up the matter and by an unanimous vote it was resolved that the first Monday in September of every year should be set apart for a labor holiday and called "Labor Day." The leaders of the movement had another matter in view in connection with the first Monday in September. It happened that just then General Master Workman Powderly, of the Knights of Labor, and Local Assembly 1562, were not on good terms, the chief had expressed himself in pretty hard terms about some of its members. The General Assembly of the Knights of Labor was to convene in New York City on the first of September of that year, and it was determined to hurry up matters and have the first Labor Day festival then with Mr. Powderly and his aids to review the procession. The program was successfully carried out, Mr. Powderly and the other members adjourned the assembly to review the parade, and 1562 and its chief again were friends.<sup>86</sup>

While it is possible that Powderly's attitude was softened by being able to preside over the first Labor Day parade, it is hard to reconcile McGuire's 1890 perception that "1562 and its chief were friends" with the actions of the Knights' Assembly executive board.

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.

Between the CLU meeting when he proposed Labor Day and the actual parade, McGuire had been invited to speak at a Labor Rally in Toronto, Canada, on July 22, 1882. However, just before leaving, McGuire sent a telegram to the rally chairman saying that his wife just had a sudden and serious accident that would prevent his coming. Maggie died a year and a half later on January 26, 1884 after several years of serious illness and hospitalization.<sup>87</sup> McGuire had written to a friend in 1884 that "the death of my wife on Jan. 26 has released me from over 3 years of pain and trouble, for she was sick that long. But her death has been a severe blow to me, still I am getting over it."<sup>88</sup>

Nine months after his first wife's death McGuire married Christina Woolf,<sup>89</sup> a young woman from Staten Island, New York. (See Historic Image 6, the McGuire Family circa 1888. McGuire called his wife Christina, "Teenie.")

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<sup>86</sup> *The Carpenter*. Philadelphia, November 15.1890. 2.

Accessible at: <https://archive.org/stream/carpenter10unit/histmss-024779#page/n63/mode/2up>

<sup>87</sup> "Uncovered during the Search." An undated document about McGuire in the Rossell family archives. O'Donnell article. McGuire's grandchildren knew about his first marriage but did not know the cause of Maggie's death.

<sup>88</sup> Galenson, Walter. *op.cit.* 24

<sup>89</sup> McGuire's diary noted that "Teenie" Woolf was born on August 18, 1865 (19 years 2 mo.s when married) and that he was "13 years and 1 mo. older."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 22

---

In 1884 the United Brotherhood of Carpenters delegation to the FOTLU convention introduced a resolution that called for a general strike for the eight-hour work day on May 1, 1886. They hoped the work stoppage might be a successful symbolic action. They could not have anticipated the response that emerged one and a half years later. Thousands responded to the call and joined local unions in large numbers.

The idea of Labor Day gradually caught on. In 1884 a handful of cities held Labor Day parades, but in 1885 turnout was broad and official support for the holiday followed. McGuire wrote that the New York City Labor Day in 1886, when Henry George ran for Mayor, "was a memorable one" and that the "United Labor party, which he was supposed to represent, rallied for the occasion in great numbers, forming probably the biggest labor parade ever seen in that city."<sup>90</sup> In 1887 Oregon became the first state to recognize the day. Over time, the idea gained favor all over the country among working people. By June 28, 1894, the day President Grover Cleveland signed an act of Congress making Labor Day a National Holiday, thirty states had already adopted the holiday themselves.<sup>91</sup>

## Competing claim for the "Father of Labor Day"

Although Peter J. McGuire is generally recognized as the "Father of Labor Day," the claim was contested shortly after the bill to make Labor Day a National Holiday was signed by President Grover Cleveland. Under the headline, "HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE," the Paterson, New Jersey, *Morning Call* noted that Matthew Maguire, not Samuel Gompers, should have received the souvenir pen President Cleveland used to sign the Labor Day bill into law.<sup>92</sup>

While Matthew Maguire himself never seems to have publicly made the claim that he was the "Father of Labor Day," others did.<sup>93</sup> In 1882, nine years after the parade, a New York City Socialist newspaper proclaimed that Matthew Maguire, first Secretary of the CLU, arranged the first great labor parade.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *The Carpenter*, November 15, 1890. 2.

<sup>91</sup> Following the deaths of workers at the hands of United States Army and United States Marshals Service during the Pullman Strike of 1894 in Chicago, the United States Congress unanimously voted to approve legislation to make Labor Day a national holiday and President Grover Cleveland signed it into law six days after the end of the strike. Some historians have argued that Cleveland supported the creation of the national holiday in an attempt to shore up support among trade unions following the Pullman Strike. The date of May 1 (an ancient European holiday known as May Day) was an alternative date, celebrated then (and now) as International Workers' Day, but President Cleveland was concerned that observance of Labor Day on May 1 would encourage Haymarket-style protests and would strengthen socialist and anarchist movements that, though distinct from one another, had rallied to commemorate the Haymarket Affair on International Workers' Day. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Day)

<sup>92</sup> Grossman Jonathan. "Who is the Father of Labor day?" *Labor History*. 14, 1993. 612-23 available at: <http://www.gompers.umd.edu/grossman%20labor%20day.pdf>

<sup>93</sup> Matthew Maguire was a high level American Socialist and its nominee for many elected offices, including twice for vice president of the United States. American Socialists took no part in the celebration of the September Labor Day. They chose instead to cling to the unofficial holiday of May 1, International Workers' Day, also known as Labour Day or Workers' Day in some countries and often referred to as May Day, an ancient European spring festival. May 1 was chosen by a pan-national organization of socialist and communist political parties to commemorate the Haymarket affair, which occurred in Chicago on 4 May 1886, and is discussed later in this nomination. The 1904 Sixth Conference of the Second International called on "all Social Democratic Party

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 23

---

In 1898, William S. Walsh mentioned Matthew Maguire's role in organizing Labor Day in his book *Curiosities of Popular Customs* but made no reference to Peter J. McGuire's role. According to Walsh, Matthew Maguire corresponded with other New York labor organizations on behalf of the CLU urging each to set aside one day in the year as their own holiday. When the CLU received favorable responses it appointed Maguire chairman of the committee to arrange for the first Labor Day celebration in 1882.<sup>95</sup> Walsh noted that the first Labor Day celebration was so successful that the CLU corresponded with other unions, this time throughout the country, about having celebrations elsewhere. A number of cities responded favorably.

In 1911, the Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, T.V. Powderly, claimed to have discussed the matter with Peter J. McGuire himself after reading about so many articles about Peter J. McGuire being the founder of Labor Day. Powderly claimed to have got Peter J. McGuire to admit that his name might have been mixed up with Matthew Maguire and that Peter J. McGuire "never claimed that credit."<sup>96</sup>

The claim that Matthew Maguire is the father of Labor Day is based on the following arguments: First, he corresponded with New York labor organizations about setting aside one day in the year as their own holiday and inviting them to the parade; second, he was chairman of the first Labor Day celebration committee and rode in a carriage at the head of the parade;<sup>97</sup> third, he was a member of the leadership of CLU of New York City when it resolved to organize the event and, after it was successful, he urged other cities to join New York City and celebrate the event in subsequent years.<sup>98</sup>

In 1967, a retired machinist from Paterson, New Jersey, George Pearlman, became a champion of his fellow machinist, Matthew Maguire, as the true father of Labor Day.<sup>99</sup> His book detailed Maguire's role in planning

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organizations and trade unions of all countries to demonstrate energetically on the First of May for the legal establishment of the 8-hour day, for the class demands of the proletariat, and for universal peace. The first of May is a national public holiday in many countries worldwide which the labor men and socialists in Europe had selected as the date for their annual demonstrations.

<sup>94</sup> *The People*. September 5, 1897.

<sup>95</sup> Walsh, William S. *Curiosities of Popular Customs*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1898. 605-607.

<sup>96</sup> T.V. Powderly to Editor of the *Druid*. Scranton, PA. September 12, 1911.

<sup>97</sup> Maguire and his wife shared the lead carriage in the parade with Henry Ward Beecher, the famous social reformer and preacher.

<sup>98</sup> For a summary of the debate on who "founded" Labor Day, see Grossman, Jonathan, *op.cit.* 612-23. Grossman concluded that while it is almost impossible to measure the role of the holiday's many substantial contributors, it is probable, though by no means certain, that both Matthew Maguire and Peter J. McGuire deserve more credit than others; Matthew, for being the active rank and file organizer and tireless arranger, and Peter for best expressing the meaning behind Labor Day "as a demonstration of fraternity and the harbinger of a better age – a more chivalrous time, when labor shall be best honored and well rewarded" and as a day to "honor the toilers of the earth, and to pay homage to those who from rude nature have delved and carved all the comfort and grandeur we behold." 623

<sup>99</sup> The Rossell Family papers include at least five letters from Pearlman to Rossell all dated in the in the 1970-1976 period. They are friendly and helpful and inform the McGuire family where they can obtain additional information on their famous father. Pearlman's papers are in the George Pearlman Research Papers Collection Number: 5022 Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Cornell University Library.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 24

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and managing New York City's first Labor Day parade.<sup>100</sup> Pearlman and others<sup>101</sup> concluded that Matthew Maguire's continued membership in the Socialist Labor Party – a Marxist party entirely unacceptable to Samuel Gompers and the conservative American Federation of Labor leadership – was the prime reason he was written out of labor history for so many years and denied recognition for his contributions to the founding of Labor Day.<sup>102</sup>

The Socialist Labor Party's convention nominated Charles H. Matchett for the presidency in 1896 after he defeated Matthew Maguire 43 to 23. Maguire, then 53, had been the tiny Marxist party's vice presidential standard bearer four years earlier and ran unsuccessfully for governor of New York in 1894. When Maguire was selected for the vice presidential nomination again the campaign's literature included a logo of Matchett and Maguire with the slogan, "Vote for the overthrow of Capitalism! Vote for the Cooperative Commonwealth!"<sup>103</sup>

## Peter J. McGuire's claim to the "Father of Labor Day"

The arguments in favor of Peter J. McGuire being the father of Labor Day are better documented than Matthew Maguire's. Peter J. McGuire published the following account of his role in founding Labor Day in the November 1887 Philadelphia issue of *The Carpenter*:

LABOR DAY.

Even at this late date, General Secretary McGuire desires to tender his thanks in return for the kindly invitations to take part in celebrations of Labor Day, tendered him by the CLUs of New York city, of Buffalo, Providence, R.I., and Syracuse, N.Y.; also to the score of other cities which desired his presence on that date.

In the spring of 1882, Mr. McGuire, our General Secretary, urged upon the CLU of New York city, the propriety of setting aside one day in the year, to be designated as "Labor Day," and to be established as a general holiday for the laboring classes throughout the United States; the day to be celebrated first by a street parade, to be followed by a picnic, the proceeds of such picnic to be divided on the co-operative plan; each union or labor organization to have as many tickets as it could sell, and the more it sold the greater would be its profits, as each society was allowed to keep for itself all the money it got from the sale of the tickets, and each would contribute to the expenses in proportion to membership. The plan was adopted, and proved very successful, and the CLU then set to work to make the day a permanent

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<sup>100</sup> Pearlman, George. *Origins of Labor Day and Chronology of Events Pertaining to Labor Day*. Clifton, New Jersey: The Maguire Association, 1976.

<sup>101</sup> Smyk, Edward A. "Matthew Maguire Played A Pivotal Labor Day Role." *Historic Passaic County: An Illustrated History*. Historical Pub Network, 2004. 29

<sup>102</sup> Richardson, Darcy G. *Others: Third Parties During the Populist Period*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc., 2007. 227

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 25

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holiday, with the result, as is now generally known, that "Labor Day" has become a fixed institution in over a hundred cities.

Our General Secretary has since been recognized as the "Father of Labor Day," and it was one of his favorite arguments that while we had many legal holidays from Thanksgiving Day, in November, to the Fourth of July, yet there was no holiday from July 4th again until Thanksgiving. He suggested that the first Monday in September should be chosen as Labor Day, as it was midway between the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving, and was at that pleasant season of the year when a street parade and picnic could be enjoyed and conducted in proper style.

Two years later, in the October 1889 issue, *The Carpenter* noted: "In the spring of 1882, General Secretary P. J. McGuire, of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, first originated the observance of a distinct and new holiday – with parade and picnic – to be known as 'Labor day'."<sup>104</sup>

Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, believed that his associate Peter J. McGuire was the "author of Labor Day" and "the man in whose brain that thought for Labor Day was generated." Gompers asked McGuire to write "a brief history of the origin and growth of the day."<sup>105</sup> McGuire's account appeared in the *American Federation* in 1902. Gompers published several accounts attributing paternity of Labor Day to Peter J. McGuire. One, "On the Significance of Labor Day," with a photo of McGuire next to Gompers labeled "the Founder of Labor Day," appeared in the September 4, 1910, issue of the *New York Times*.<sup>106</sup> Another, "The Origin of Labor day," was published in the September 1919 issue of *The Carpenter*. Gompers noted that McGuire gave credit for the inspiration to many others when he wrote:

More than all, 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, and which in later years attained widespread influence.<sup>107</sup>

In 1929, American Federation of Labor President William Green determined to give an "authentic history of Labor Day origin" which "once and for all will end the controversy" and then reiterated McGuire's role.<sup>108</sup>

McGuire's position as the founder of the holiday has become so strongly entrenched that union leaders and elected officials have made annual Labor Day pilgrimages to his gravesite at Arlington Cemetery in Pennsauken, New Jersey, since 1906 (See Photo 16 of New Jersey Governor Philip Murphy at the Peter J.

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<sup>104</sup> *The Carpenter* October 1889. 4.

<sup>105</sup> Samuel Gompers to P.J. McGuire, July 26, 1894; *Gomper's Letterbooks*. Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.; *The Evening Star*, Washington, D.C., June 29, 1894.

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.sundaymagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/19100904-7-the.pdf>

<sup>107</sup> September 1919 issue of *The Carpenter*.

<sup>108</sup> "President Green Gives Authentic History of Labor Day's Origin." *The Federal Employee*. September, 1929, 13.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 26

---

McGuire Memorial on the 123<sup>rd</sup> Annual Peter J. McGuire Labor Day Observance on September 1, 2017).<sup>109</sup> At the 1952 gravesite ceremony dedicating the McGuire memorial, Frank Duffy, a union brother of McGuire's quoted from McGuire's 1897 editorial<sup>110</sup> as if it were a speech made in 1882 and compared this "speech" to Lincoln's Gettysburg address.<sup>111</sup> In 1970, officials of the Carpenter's Union claimed that the Secretary of Labor, James D. Hodgson, agreed to McGuire's place as the founder.<sup>112</sup>

The Library of Congress' Labor page states:

The first Labor Day was celebrated in New York City on September 5, 1882, when some 10,000 workers assembled to participate in America's first Labor Day parade. After marching from City Hall to Union Square, the workers and their families gathered in Reservoir Park for a picnic, concert and speeches. This first Labor Day celebration was initiated by Peter J. McGuire, a carpenter and labor union leader who a year earlier co-founded the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, a precursor of the American Federation of Labor.

McGuire had proposed his idea for a holiday honoring American workers at a labor meeting in early 1882. New York's CLU quickly approved his proposal and began planning events for the second Tuesday in September. McGuire had suggested a September date in order to provide a break during the long stretch between Independence Day and Thanksgiving. While the first Labor Day was held on a Tuesday, the holiday was soon moved to the first Monday in September, the date we continue to observe.<sup>113</sup>

### The Eight-hour Day

In early 1883, McGuire moved the Brotherhood's headquarters to Philadelphia. In February he made short trips to New England and spoke in Boston, Providence, and Hartford on successive nights. In May he embarked on a tour of 33 cities returning to Philadelphia in the second week of July. For the next four or five years McGuire was constantly on the road. In a different city each night he would hold a meeting, rally a group of supporters, and found a local. Others helped on the local scene, but McGuire was the only national organizer for many years.<sup>114</sup>

McGuire's union grew gradually, from a membership of 2,042 in 1881 to 5,789 in 1885.<sup>115</sup> Some cities were well organized while others remained entirely nonunion. McGuire spent eighteen hours a day speaking,

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<sup>109</sup> *The New York Times*. September 4, 1956. Organizers changed the date for the memorial services to the Friday before Labor Day in 1978.

<sup>110</sup> *American Federationist*. October, 1897. 183; September 1902. 487.

<sup>111</sup> Duffy, Frank "Union Brother of Peter J. McGuire Throws Light on Labor Day Founder," *The Signalman's Journal*, July-August, 1966.

<sup>112</sup> Gilbride, Neil, *Associated Press*, September 2, 1956.

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/wiseguide/sept03/labor.html>

<sup>114</sup> Lyon, *op.cit.* 176-177

<sup>115</sup> "A Brief History of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. 9 See: <http://www.centralsouthcarpenters.org/pdf/UBC-History.pdf>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 27

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writing and organizing to keep the union alive. The national office followed him as he moved around, responding to crisis after crisis.

During 1883 McGuire came to view trade unions as permanent institutions which represented a coming stage of social organization. He also began to accept the usefulness of benefits as a way of holding the union together and as a way to normalize worker's uncertain existence.

At its 1884 convention the FOTLU resolved to make May 1, 1886, the magic day on which men would have eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for what they will and resolved to make Labor Day a national holiday.

In October 1884, McGuire moved the Brotherhood's office to Cleveland. In 1884-85 the Brotherhood added 1,495 new members bringing its total to 6,500, or about two percent of the total number of carpenters according to the 1880 census.

Sensing the stirring of a new labor militancy, Brotherhood leaders decided the time was ripe for a national demonstration of American workers. In October 1885, McGuire submitted the matter of striking for eight hours to a general vote of the Brotherhood. An impetus for the eight hour movement was the successful strike of Cleveland carpenters, organized by McGuire while residing there, obtaining a half day on Saturday. By November, 1885, large eight hour meetings were held in Detroit, Cincinnati, Boston, and other cities. New York City held a large meeting in early December. At the convention of the FOTLU in December McGuire reported his canvass of carpenter's unions: 69 in favor and 9 against.

Historians labeled 1886 the year of the great uprising of labor. Never before had so many American workers acted in unison for a common goal as they demonstrated for shorter hours in cities across the map. As the Wisconsin Commissioner of Labor put it: "the agitation permeated our entire social atmosphere. . . . It was the topic of conversation in the shop, on the street, at the family table, at the bar, in the counting rooms, and the subject of numerous able sermons from the pulpit."

During the spring of 1886 McGuire traveled across the county speaking about the eight-hour day. When May 1, 1886, the proposed date for a general strike arrived, 350,000 workers from every industry struck more than 11,000 establishments across the country.<sup>116</sup> The building tradesmen were the central force. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners locals led the marching columns in every city, inspiring others with their determination. Thousands of workers took to the streets of their cities. Hundreds of rallies, walkouts, and strikes demonstrated the appeal of the eight-hour day so much so that the FOTLU started planning a follow-up series of actions for May 1, 1890, under the leadership of the carpenters union since, in the words of

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<sup>116</sup> <https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-people/peter-mcguire>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 28

---

AFL President Samuel Gompers, it was the “best disciplined, prepared and determined” force in the labor movement.<sup>117</sup>

McGuire was one of the major national spokesmen for the May 1986 strikers. His involvement was so complete that he had to temporarily suspend the regular business of the Brotherhood.

Union carpenters won higher wages and decreased hours in 53 cities in 1886. Strikers secured eight hour days in forty two cities. The successes of the union and the dynamic character of its leader attracted thousands of unorganized carpenters. By the end of the summer of 1886, Brotherhood membership had grown to 21,423. Four years later, membership topped 50,000, and McGuire reported that the Brotherhood was the largest and most powerful organization, numerically, of any special trade in the whole civilized world.

The first May Day was a huge success for other unions, as well. In all, the May 1 actions involved 340,000 working people. Of these, 150,000 won shorter hours without striking; 190,000 struck, and 42,000 of the strikers improved their conditions.<sup>118</sup> The largest of the May Day demonstrations was in Chicago, where 80,000 workers went on strike for an eight-hour day, with another 45,000 in New York and 32,000 in Cincinnati. One of the largest strikes was in Chicago at the McCormick Reaper Works, where Pinkerton agents and the police harassed and beat locked-out steelworkers as they picketed. On May 3, the police attacked, killing at least two workers and wounding many more. The next day, a rally was called for Haymarket Square in Chicago to support the strikers and oppose police brutality

### Haymarket Square Riot

Historians consider the May 4, 1886, Chicago Haymarket Square Riot one of the seminal events in the history of American labor. In a sense it represented the result of Peter McGuire’s efforts to agitate for the eight-hour day gone wrong.

On May 4, 1886 a group of workers gathered at Haymarket Square to protest the Chicago police killing of several picketing workers at the South Side McCormick Reaper Plant the previous day. Instead of the expected 20,000 people, fewer than 2,500 attended the planned meeting at Haymarket Square.<sup>119</sup> When the meeting was almost over, only about two hundred people remained in the Square when 176 policemen carrying Winchester repeater rifles attacked them.<sup>120</sup>

Someone threw a dynamite bomb at the police who were dispersing the public meeting. The blast and following gunfire killed seven police officers and four civilians and wounded many others. The police panicked, and in the darkness many shot at their own men.

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.centernalsouthcarpenters.org/pdf/UBC-History.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> <https://popularresistance.org/the-true-story-of-labor-day-debunking-the-myth/>

<sup>119</sup> Schneirov, Richard. *op. cit.* 31 states that anarchists convened the protest meeting at Haymarket Square and that the police who attacked them were under the command of the notorious Captain Bonfield known for his motto, “the club today saves the bullet tomorrow.”

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org/the-haymarket-affair/>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 29

---

Martial law was declared the next day in Chicago and throughout the nation. Anti-labor governments used the incident to go after local union movements. Chicago labor leaders were rounded up and pro-union newspapers were closed. One week after the Haymarket bomb, the contractors' association declared its intention of restoring the ten-hour day, and by early June one thousand carpenters were locked out. Police apprehended eight anarchists on charges of conspiracy to commit murder. Seven of eight men selected for trial were sentenced to hang and the eighth to serve fifteen years at hard labor. While anarchists were heavily involved in leading the more militant actions, many FOTLU and carpenter locals had participated in the strike. Samuel Gompers appealed to Governor Oglesby to spare the convicted men's lives. Oglesby spared two, but allowed the remaining convicted five to be hanged.

After Haymarket, FOTLU proposed a truce between it and the more militant Knights of Labor.<sup>121</sup> McGuire signed a letter with other labor leaders calling for a meeting in Philadelphia on May 18, 1886 to promote labor peace. But Gompers and McGuire also planned to swing union support towards an entirely new labor federation believing that the Knights were threatening the very existence of craft unionism and that their radical attitudes could attract government action in the wake of the riots. McGuire crafted a proposal asking the Knights not to initiate into their order any trade union member without the permission of his union or any other worker who worked for less than the prescribed wage scale of his craft.

A craft union group within the Knights forced its leaders to accept and agree, but the leaders could not get a debate or vote on the proposal at their October 1886 convention. Instead the convention passed anti-craft union resolutions, ordered the Cigar Makers Union to leave the Knights, and called for a new national assembly of craft union members – a direct challenge to FOTLU.

### **American Federation of Labor**

The Knights' action spurred the craft unions into action. FOTLU changed its name to the American Federation of Labor (AFL) on December 8, 1886 at a convention in Columbus, Ohio, attended by forty two delegates from 25 labor organizations and 13 national unions.<sup>122</sup> McGuire was at the peak of his career, the undisputed leader of one of the largest trade unions in the US. He called the first session to order and was unanimously elected chairman. Gompers was elected President. McGuire added the duties of AFL secretary to his Brotherhood obligations. The new AFL launched the drive across the country for the shorter workday. Workers rallied in cities all over the nation.

Popular pressure continued for the establishment of the 8-hour day. The AFL affirmed its decision to campaign for the shorter workday and May 1, 1890, as the date on which all Brotherhood workers would strike for an eight-hour work day. McGuire directed the movement personally, traveling from one strike point to the next.

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<sup>121</sup> While the Knight's national office opposed the eight-hour strike, their local assemblies generally cooperated in the movement.

<sup>122</sup> McGuire's grand daughter, Iris Rossell, told a reporter that McGuire and Samuel Gompers founded the American Federation of Labor and "the first meeting was held in my grandmother Catherine McGuire's parlor on 18<sup>th</sup> Street in New York. Source: Knarr, Jack, "Her granddad fought for the working man," *Burlington County Times* reprint Rossell family collection 101<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Labor Day [unknown date].

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 30

---

“Two hours a day less,” McGuire preached, “means that five men have to be hired in place of four to do the same amount of work, and thus men now idle would be able to live.” The eight-hour day was as much a moral question as an economic one to McGuire. “This labor agitation,” he told a Faneuil Hall audience of Boston area carpenters in March 1886, “is not, as some imagine, the rantings of a howling mob, nor is it simply a struggle to get possession of more grub... It is a struggle to secure an opportunity for physical, mental and moral improvement among the people, and the 8-hour movement is the entering wedge.” He reminded his audience, “While men are poorly paid and working long hours for a bare existence, there cannot be that progress necessary for the perpetuity of good government and the welfare of man.”<sup>123</sup>

The strike resulted in one of the most impressive victories for trade union solidarity in the nineteenth century. More than 23,000 carpenters in 36 cities won the eight-hour day, and some 32,000 more in 234 cities gained a nine hour day.<sup>124</sup>

By the end of 1899 carpenters in 123 cities were working eight hours per day where ten hours was universally the rule in the trade before the Brotherhood was established and in over 300 cities, the nine hour day was then universally the rule.<sup>125</sup>

Between 1886 and 1890 membership in the Brotherhood had swelled from 21,000 to 50,000.<sup>126</sup> In Philadelphia, the Brotherhood had five local unions, including Union No. 8, the parent union, which was originally Carpenters’ Assembly, No. 18, of the Knights of Labor and took part in the formation of the United Brotherhood in 1881.<sup>127</sup>

In December 1899 McGuire traveled to Detroit to preside over the nineteenth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor. As AFL vice president, he filled in for President Samuel Gompers who was seriously ill, presiding over a union of upwards of 600,000 American workmen.<sup>128</sup>

McGuire and Gompers, with the Haymarket tragedy fresh in their memory, were forced to think and act strategically during the 1893-97 depression even as the carpenters led demonstrations demanding jobs and public relief.

### **Pullman strike**

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<sup>123</sup> All quotations in paragraph from Brooks, Thomas R., *op.cit.* 38.

<sup>124</sup> <https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-people/peter-mcguire>

<sup>125</sup> “Want Eight-hours for a Day’s Work. Carpenters Notify Employers of Their Movement for a Shorter Day,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 10, 1899, 10.

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.carpenters.org/about-ubc/21st-century-union/history/> These statistics were gathered and maintained at the United Brotherhood’s national headquarters at the Lippincott Building, Twelfth and Filbert streets, Philadelphia.

<sup>127</sup> The first carpenters union was formed in Philadelphia in 1806.

<sup>128</sup> “Want Eight-hours...” see note 54 above.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 31

---

In the summer of 1893 railroad-car magnate George Pullman, who had run and equipped his model company town (Pullman) to uplift his resident workers, announced wage reductions but no reductions in rent for company homes or price reductions in company run stores. When Pullman fired union leaders who led a protest walkout, the American Railway Union led by Eugene V. Debs began a sympathy boycott of all railroads using Pullman cars. The rank and file Chicago building trades were strongly in favor of joining, but were blocked by Gompers, McGuire, and the AFL Executive Board. The AFL continued to ban members from joining the strike even after President Grover Cleveland sent thirty four hundred federal troops to Chicago to keep order, but who had fired into crowds of workers killing as many as thirty people and wounding scores.<sup>129</sup> McGuire told the Chicago Building Trades Council that the strike stood little chance of success and a defeat on a national scale would jeopardize the gains the AFL had made to date. The AFL opposition and Debs imprisonment doomed the Pullman strike.<sup>130</sup>

#### Late 1890s

McGuire continued his dual role as secretary-treasurer of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and first vice president of the American Federation of Labor through the end of the 1890s. In December Gompers and McGuire narrowly beat back the election of John McBride as president at the convention of the Federation of Labor in favor of Gompers. Every socialist delegate had voted for McBride. McGuire was elected first vice president unanimously.

By 1899 the United Brotherhood had 48,726 members of whom 34,721 were beneficial members.<sup>131</sup> Experience had taught McGuire that strikes in his trade must be settled rapidly and should be avoided as much as possible. McGuire said that the shortening of hours had been the result of strikes. Appearing before an industrial commission he said that carpenters and joiners worked eight hours a day in 108 cities, nine hour days in 426 cities, and nine or ten hours five days per week with eight hour Saturdays in 320 cities.<sup>132</sup>

McGuire continued to travel to support local unions. In June 1899, for example, he traveled to Scranton, Pennsylvania to support striking carpenters who reportedly were "aglow with enthusiasm over his coming, and are confident he will help them very materially to victory."<sup>133</sup> In October he joined Samuel Gompers and other national labor leaders to speak before a mass labor rally in Assembly Hall in Philadelphia in support of

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<sup>129</sup> Siegel, Rachel. "Who started Labor Day? The bloody and confusing history of an American holiday." *The Washington Post*, September 4, 2107. The article includes the argument of Sharon Farrell, caretaker of the Grover Cleveland Birthplace in Caldwell, N.J., that challenges a widely held belief that Cleveland rushed the legislation establishing Labor Day as a national holiday in June 1894 to help make up for the dead people on the streets of Chicago killed by the National Guardsmen during the Pullman Strike. Farrell said the law's timing was not politically motivated since Cleveland had already served two terms and had no intention of seeking a third.

<sup>130</sup> For a greater account of the Pullman strike see Altmont, Lindsey. *The Pullman Strike*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942. For the actions of McGuire and Gompers see District Council. *Proceedings*. July 11, 1894.

<sup>131</sup> "The Carpenters." *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*. May 10, 1899. 4.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>133</sup> "The Scranton Strike. Mr. McGuire's Coming Fills the Strikers with Enthusiasm." *The Wilkes-Barre News*. June 28, 1899. 1.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 32

---

Cramps ship yard workers strike. McGuire's speech was met with applause at almost every sentence. He said that the meeting took him back twenty years when he spoke in the same hall. "In those days," he said, "the men at Cramps got better wages than they do now. They didn't take advantage of their opportunities and now have to content piecemeal for what they had at that time."<sup>134</sup> McGuire said, "The first thing to do to advance wages is to stop work overtime and also piece work and subcontracts." He noted that Philadelphia has long been looked upon in all trades as the scab refuge of America, and he wanted to show them that Philadelphia would eventually become a labor capital.<sup>135</sup>

On December 11, 1899, McGuire went to Detroit for the nineteenth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor, of which he was vice president. The serious illness of President Samuel Gompers placed McGuire at the head of the big federation, with its membership of upwards of 600,000.<sup>136</sup>

### Separation and death

By the turn of the century, McGuire was very ill. Ill health and alcoholism forced McGuire to resign from the AFL in 1900, and growing opposition to his leadership of the UBC led to his expulsion on the basis of "trumped up embezzlement charges."<sup>137</sup> By one account, McGuire was elbowed out of his leadership position in the Carpenter's Brotherhood by opportunistic business unionists through methods which "can fairly be described as despicable" because ordinary democratic procedures would not achieve their ends.<sup>138</sup> He was confronted with charges of embezzlement brought by fellow executive board members Frank Duffy<sup>139</sup> and William Huber and a Philadelphia attorney, Francis S. Brown.<sup>140</sup>

Thomas Brooks' *Road to Dignity* states that as day to day management of the union became too much for McGuire he became ill and began to drink too much. When Willam D. Huber became president in 1899 he found he could not work with McGuire. In 1901 Huber reported that the union's office was in deplorable condition.

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<sup>134</sup> "Thousands of Workers Assembly in Mass Meeting in the Interest of Less Hours." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. October 11, 1899. 3.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>136</sup> "Want Eight Hours for a Day's Work." *Philadelphia Inquirer*. December 10, 1899. 10.

<sup>137</sup> <https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-people/peter-mcguire>

<sup>138</sup> O'Donnell article.

<sup>139</sup> In 1900, Duffy was elected to the national executive council of the Carpenters. He played a key role in ousting McGuire. The same year, he was elected the union's general-secretary, a position which he held until 1950. He was a close associate of UBCJ president William Hutcheson. Source: [https://www.revolv.com/main/index.php?s=Frank%20Duffy%20\(labor%20leader\)](https://www.revolv.com/main/index.php?s=Frank%20Duffy%20(labor%20leader))

<sup>140</sup> The AFL-CIO website history pages provide another motivation behind those who sought McGuire's removal: "The Carpenters continued to expand throughout the 1890s until it was too much for any one man to administer. Increasingly, paid "business agents," an organizational innovation pioneered by the Carpenters, took over the work of running the union's locals, and they pressed for greater power at the national level. For years McGuire resisted their efforts, fearing they would lead the organization away from what he saw as one of its most important missions—to be a nursery of socialist ideals and industrial cooperation." <https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-people/peter-mcguire>



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 33

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While an April audit uncovered a shortage of \$6,300, later a little over \$10,000, few believed that he had deliberately embezzled the money for his personal use.<sup>141</sup> In December 1901 an indictment was returned by the grand jury in Philadelphia against McGuire, charging him with fraudulently converting to his own use \$10,000 belonging to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.<sup>142</sup>

Gompers sent AFL Secretary-Treasurer Frank Morrison to seek a compromise. The Executive Board and McGuire effected the compromise. It was shown that during McGuire's service as treasurer of the organization he had handled over \$1 million of the funds of the order and that he had devoted twenty years to the development of the labor movement. McGuire entered a counter claim for salary due. Agreement was reached that the criminal proceedings against him would be discontinued in exchange for McGuire paying \$2,000 into the treasury of the brotherhood and waiving all claims against the order. McGuire paid \$1,000 in July 1902 and the remaining \$1,000 in September.<sup>143</sup>

The compromise under which the Executive Board's proposal to absolve McGuire from the financial charges was overruled in the referendum in August 1902, and the matter was transferred to the convention of the Brotherhood in September.

McGuire resigned at the 1902 convention in Atlanta. Looking considerably older than his 50 years, the now-frail leader told the delegates he could not and would not continue. "A man wears out like a piece of machinery," he concluded. (Historic Image 7, P.J. McGuire circa 1903)

Frank Duffy, who replaced McGuire as general secretary, wrote to Gompers about the controversy and how the labor world and the labor press had gone wild and said many very unpleasant, unnecessary and uncalled for things about General President Huber and himself. Duffy said that for a time the leaders were looked upon as something very bad and unfit to associate with and had gotten the "cold shoulder" on more than one occasion from other union leaders.<sup>144</sup>

Peter McGuire's family fell on difficult times and struggled financially after he resigned. The union he helped create provided no pension.<sup>145</sup> The family was forced to downsize their residences, eventually settling at 204 Byron Street, Camden. After receiving financial aid from his sisters in January 1904 McGuire lamented to them that he now saw "more than ever how I have been a fool for others."<sup>146</sup> He complained that his old colleague,

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<sup>141</sup> Gompers wrote to Frank Duffy that he did not believe that McGuire was intentionally dishonest and any shortage in his account was brought about by the awful mental strain and responsibility devolving upon him during the years of struggle on behalf of the Brotherhood, and of the general labor movement.

<sup>142</sup> *Warrenton Herald*. December 18, 1901. 2

<sup>143</sup> "Carpenters Refuse to Absolve M"Guire," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 12, 1902. 4

<sup>144</sup> Galenson, Walter. *op.cit.* 95

<sup>145</sup> The Brotherhood later appropriated funds for the repair of the McGuire residence, and in 1914 provided Mrs. McGuire with a small weekly allowance. Galenson, Walter. *op.cit.* 95

<sup>146</sup> PJ McGuire letter to his "Dear Sisters" dated Camden, N.J. Thursday eve Jan 14/ 04 in Rossell family collection.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 34

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Samuel Gompers, kept putting off his request to be hired as a local Organizer for \$25 per week and declining to honor his prior commitment to pay McGuire \$500 to write the history of the AFL. He also complained that his successor, Frank Duffy, “too has fooled me on [writing] the Brotherhood history which was to bring me \$500 more.”

By his own account in October 1904 he suffered from “severe Rheumatism,” especially in his right arm and had repeated injury to his left leg which had some kind of open sore.<sup>147</sup> McGuire made some money as a reporter and labor editor of the *Daily Ledger* in Philadelphia and worked for the Disston Saw Works even as he sought to place his daughter Myrtle to “work in a good shoe shop in Camden on ladies shoes, Ferris & Co.”

The man who founded the Brotherhood and presided over its meteoric growth died poor on February 18, 1906, at the age of 54 at his home at 204 Byron Street, Camden, New Jersey. His last words were that he had to hurry to help the boys in Local 122 in California where there was trouble.

McGuire’s March 3, 1906 obituary in the *National Labor Standard* reported his death was “due to a general breakdown of the nervous system.” A monograph on McGuire’s life story stated he was diagnosed with dropsy in September 1901.<sup>148</sup> McGuire’s grand daughter said “he was sick for a couple of years before he died” and “had cirrhosis of the liver.”<sup>149</sup> She also said he just felt all his friends deserted him and “in the end he wasn’t appreciated until he died.”

Another obituary reported that McGuire’s enemies had succeeded a few years ago in removing him from his position by casting a cloud upon his reputation while he was sick in bed, and that from the time the accusations were made until his death McGuire was a “broken hearted man.” It said the Brotherhood General Executive Board forced McGuire to leave his position as secretary-treasurer at the Brotherhood’s national office in the Lippincott Building at Twelfth and Filbert streets, Philadelphia. It opined that McGuire was “a noble man, as well as an able one, who gave his services to uplifting his fellow man” and that he “will long be remembered for the good he has done in the cause of organized labor, and his name will live after the names of some of his enemies are forgotten.”

Another article following his death noted that McGuire had been a national labor figure for nearly thirty years who had built up the Carpenter’s union from nine small local unions to the second largest national labor organization in the United States (second only to the United Mine Workers) with over 1,000 subordinate unions in North America and 80,000 members.<sup>150</sup> It said his work had put millions of dollars in the pockets of his members and reduced their hours of labor until the eight-hour workday became general in the trade. It

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<sup>147</sup> PJ McGuire letter to his “Dear Sister” dated Phila. Monday. Oct. 24/04 in Rossell family collection.

<sup>148</sup> Corotis, A. Charles, *op.cit.*

<sup>149</sup> Knarr. *op. cit.*

<sup>150</sup> *New York News*, *op. cit.*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 35

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noted that he had averted countless threatened strikes and settled dozens of serious differences between conflicting trade bodies.

McGuire's funeral took place at his home, 204 Byron Street, Camden, New Jersey. Frank Morrison, secretary of the American Federation of Labor, came to Camden and bore all funeral expenses. According to Arthur A. Quinn, one of the four men who attended the funeral, there were but two coaches besides the hearse: one for the family and the other for the four men. Quinn wrote that "he was buried in what appeared to be a wilderness."<sup>151</sup> No priest, minister, or rabbi said a word over him. The only form of service over him was recited by the undertaker. He was "laid in his grave unwept, unhonored, and unsung by those for whom he labored and to whom he brought hope, of a more just and better world."<sup>152</sup>

McGuire's remains were reinterred at the Arlington Cemetery on September 2, 1906.<sup>153</sup> A monument (headstone) was dedicated to Peter J. McGuire at an observance on September 3, 1906. (Historic Image 9).

The dedication of the headstone was the first of many Labor Day celebrations honoring McGuire. It began in Philadelphia with a huge parade of several thousand working men of various trades from Philadelphia, Camden, and vicinity.<sup>154</sup> It started at Broad Street and Girard Avenue in Philadelphia moving from Girard Avenue to South Street on Broad Street, counter march back up Broad to Chestnut Street, then down Chestnut Street to Delaware Avenue, then taking the ferry at the foot of Market Street. Eight hundred printers, who had been on strike for ten months for an eight-hour day, were given the right of the line. The other divisions were composed of members of the Allied Building Trades Council, the Metal Workers and the International Garment Workers. The Brotherhood of Painters wore white caps, the Carpenters black caps, and each carried canes tipped with tiny stars and strips. Nearly every body of toilers carried flags and placards, many appearing for an eight-hour day.<sup>155</sup>

James Ryan, Parade Marshal from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America was the featured speaker at Arlington Cemetery where McGuire's massive gravesite monument was unveiled. Wesley C. Hall took President of AFL took Gompers place, who could not be present. Hall pronounced the eulogy on the Father of Labor Day saying "it was due to Mr. McGuire that this great American holiday was created. " True to McGuire's vision, the parade was followed by a picnic later in the afternoon at Electric Park<sup>156</sup> nearby and two baseball "matches" between teams representing various unions.

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<sup>151</sup> The "wilderness" Quinn described was Roman Catholic Calvary Cemetery (now in Cherry Hill, NJ).

<sup>152</sup> Quinn, Arthur A. "The Tragic End of "Pete" McGuire!" Newark, Sept. 26, 1946, printed article in Rossell papers.

<sup>153</sup> McGuire's wife, a non-Catholic, would not have been able to be buried with her husband at Calvary Cemetery. She was buried with him at Arlington Cemetery.

<sup>154</sup> "Shaft to Labor Day Founder Unveiled in Toiler's Celebration: Monument to P.J. McGuire dedicated in Arlington Cemetery After Parade." *The North American*. 2. The "shaft" in this headline described the fact that the headstone was carved in a non-union shop.

<sup>155</sup> *Evening Star*, Wash DC, article about Labor Day in Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1906

<sup>156</sup> To generate weekend traffic, trolley companies created new destinations, generally at the end of their lines, for the public to attend on the weekends, whether it be a picnic park or (later) an amusement park. Regardless of the type of park, the destinations

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 36

---

There were also large Labor Day parades in other cities in 1906. Ten thousand marked in Chicago and Twenty five thousand in New York.

In 1952, to mark the centennial of his birth, the Brotherhood's General Executive Board recommended and the convention adopted a resolution calling upon the Brotherhood and all its subordinate bodies to celebrate the event and authorized the erection of an appropriate monument "so that McGuire's memory and the good he accomplished for the American worker may be perpetuated for all time."<sup>157</sup>

Several thousand people, many of them ordinary union members, attended the memorial dedication ceremonies on Aug. 9, 1952. Vincent Caya, McGuire's grandson, unveiled the statute. Speakers included the President of the New Jersey Federation of Labor, the mayors of Camden and Pennsauken, General President Hutcheson of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the President of the American Federation of Labor, William Green, the secretary and treasurer of the American Federation of Labor (who later attained near legendary status himself) George Meany, and the U.S. Secretary of Labor, Maurice Tobin.

McGuire's successor as secretary of the Carpenters, Frank Duffy, recalled his associations with Peter McGuire at the ceremony.<sup>158</sup> He noted McGuire's organization of the Brotherhood, his proposal of Labor Day "as one festal day for tribute to the genius of American Industry" that should be "dedicated to peace, civilization, and the triumphs of industry... to honor the Toilers of the Earth who from rude nature have carved all the grandeur we behold." He noted McGuire's leadership in the eight-hour day movement. And he described McGuire as "a great fellow – a wonderful man – active, wide-awake, and up to date on everything that affected wage earners." He said he was well educated, well read and well balanced and "was of a rather quiet and retiring disposition – the gentleman of Labor." He said he was opposed to strikes, was a good speaker and brilliant orator, a great debater and good writer. He said he had a charming personality and a pleasant disposition, full of wit and humor who could turn meetings into friendly, entertaining, educational affairs.<sup>159</sup>

Hutcheson declared the carpenter's brotherhood had recognized the dangers of communism long before the "current open difficulty between this country and Russia." Tobin declared both McGuire and Gompers were socialist theorists in their younger days, but came to learn "the answer to the problems of American labor were not to be found in the American labor movement, but inside it." He said "They learned that the challenge

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owned by the local electric company or accessed by the electric trolley were commonly called electric parks. After 1903, Luna Park in Coney Island's success (with the park's entrance decked with electric lights) inspired the creation of Electric Parks, which spread throughout North America. Like their Luna Park and White City cousins, a typical Electric Park featured a shoot-the-chutes and lagoon, a roller coaster (usually a figure eight or a mountain railway), a midway, a Ferris wheel, games, and a pavilion. Most also had miniature railroads.

<sup>157</sup> Galenson, Walter. *op.cit.* 95

<sup>158</sup> Frank Duffy led the campaign to force McGuire to resign and to reimburse unaccounted for funds.

<sup>159</sup> Reprint of Frank Duffy's remarks at McGuire ceremonies on August 9, 1952, Rossell family collection.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 37

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of labor was not to tear down our private enterprise system but to strengthen it and see that a greater share of its benefits could go to the workers.”<sup>160</sup>

Peter J. McGuire founded one of the most powerful unions in America, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. He led the fight for the eight-hour workday. He was a founding officer of the American Federation of Labor, and he was the Father of Labor Day (Historic Image 8).

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<sup>160</sup> “McGuire Praised as Labor Unveils Pioneer’s Statue,” *Courier Post*, August 11, 1952.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 38

---

**The Sites**

Local 8 of the United Brotherhood and the Central Labor Union of Camden provided a massive granite monument and the Arlington cemetery lots for Peter J. McGuire and some financial provisions for his widow. The national United Brotherhood also began a memorial fund drive to benefit McGuire's survivors. The monumental stone, topped with a cross, also includes the emblem of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. It was carved at M.C. Lyon's Sons of Camden, New Jersey.

From 1906 to 2017 labor leaders, union members, politicians, and McGuire family members made the pilgrimage to McGuire's grave and, after 1952, to his memorial at Arlington Cemetery in Pennsauken, NJ. <sup>161</sup> They lay wreaths and deliver speeches in tribute to the man and his great work. <sup>162</sup>

The number of attendees and speakers varied from year to year. Often union leaders and elected officials would use the occasion to observe labor's current condition and advocate for specific reforms to improve those conditions.

The following subsection provides sample summaries of these commemorative events for a selection of years between 1906 and 1968. A sampling of these gatherings is represented in the historic image section of this nomination and in the following summaries for selected years.

**1906**

The first Labor Day Philadelphia parade and march to McGuire's grave are described above in Section 8. There were also large Labor Day parades in other cities in 1906. Ten thousand marked in Chicago and Twenty five thousand in New York.

**1916**

(See Historic Image 10). A group of McGuire family members, union leaders, and workers commemorated McGuire's life on Labor Day 1916 at the McGuire Gravesite.

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<sup>161</sup> In 1978 organizers changed the McGuire Labor Day commemorations (breakfast followed by wreath laying and speeches at McGuire Memorial and Gravesite in Arlington Cemetery to the Friday before Labor Day.

<sup>162</sup> Newspaper clippings and documents regarding Peter J. McGuire and the history of his Labor Day Memorials are contained in the University of Maryland archives Series 6. Biographical Files, 1877-1997 under "Biography – McGuire, Peter J. in box 8. In February 2018 the Rossell branch of the McGuire family loaned all of their McGuire documents (including the Diary and all McGuire Labor Day event brochures and newspaper articles) to the University of Maryland to be digitized and kept in the University's labor archives.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 39

---

## 1920

Simplicity marked the decoration of the grave of Peter J. McGuire as members of the Carpenters' District Trade of Philadelphia and of the Camden Central Labor Union met at the Pennsylvania Railroad ferries in the morning and went to Arlington cemetery in special trolley cars.<sup>163</sup> They were accompanied by McGuire's three daughters and his son, Mrs. George Caya, Miss Lillian McGuire, Miss Myrtle McGuire and Peter J. McGuire, Jr., and a son-in-law George S. Caya.

## 1931

More than 2,000 members of the New Jersey State Federation of Labor gathered at the McGuire graveside. Those participating in the service marched to the cemetery in solemn procession to the huge wreaths and other floral tributes banked upon the grave. Rev. George Ellsdree, one of the principal speakers, urged strict enforcement of the liquor laws and then devoted his address to a discussion of the present economic situation, urging the national government to take steps to end the present depression and its accompanying unemployment. The previous night members of the Federation had passed a resolution calling on AFL President William Green to obtain an interview with President Hoover to call a special session of Congress in the interest of reducing unemployment.

## 1933

Two hundred representatives of labor organizations met at McGuire's grave to extol his memory and hear about current labor issues. A plane from Central Airport circled overhead and dropped wreaths. Charles Hollopeter, AFL organizer in Camden County, presided and Frank Burch, secretary of Philadelphia's Central Labor Union informed listeners that organized labor will not permit chislers and slackers to misrepresent themselves under the NIRA [National Industrial Recovery Act]. McGuire's son and three daughters attend with two grandchildren. Among the speakers was William T. Allen, member of the executive board of the United Brotherhood and Joiners.

## 1936

McGuire's son and four daughters attended the service at the gravesite which features speakers pleading for a reunion of labor's ranks, then divided between the AFL and John L. Lewis' Committee for Industrial Organization. M. J. McDermott, Philadelphia Local 8 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and

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<sup>163</sup> "Camden Decorates M'Guire Grave." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 7, 1920. 18.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 40

---

James Knowd, Pennsylvania organizer for the AFL blamed the split on Lewis's minority who had declared themselves outlaws by disobeying the rule of the majority.<sup>164</sup>

**1937**

Over 100 labor leaders, mostly from the AFL unions, gathered at the cemetery to hear scathing attacks on John L. Lewis and the Committee for Industrial Organization (Historic Image 11.)

**1940**

In 1940, on the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, the Central Labor Union of Camden, the Central Labor Union of Philadelphia, Local No. 8. United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (McGuire's own union), the Metropolitan District Council of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, and Local No. 393, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of Camden, placed wreathes at McGuire's grave. Three hundred members of organized labor were present, joining McGuire's three daughters and two grand daughters.<sup>165</sup> The general representative of the United Brotherhood noted that there were then 2000 local unions of carpenters throughout the nation, with membership of 340,000. The business representative of Carpenters Local 393 said, "It should be the duty of all labor to be present at such a gathering as this and the time should come when there wouldn't be elbow room out here because so many people were present to do honor to this great man." Other union's represented included the Philadelphia Electro-typers and Finishers Union, the truck drivers' local No 676, and No. 393 carpenters.

**1941**

About 150 persons attended the 1941 Labor Day services at the McGuire grave, including representatives of the AFL and CIO, who took a respite from their task of building the Nation's defenses. Speakers noted that their unions had members in vital defense industries and represented a "vast army of workers in the industrial arsenal of this nation." W. J. McDermott of the Building Trades Council, AFL, said labor would gladly make sacrifices for national defenses and cited a recent agreement between union officials and national production officials whereby craftsmen agreed to accept time and a half instead of overtime.<sup>166</sup> The general representative of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners noted that McGuire's organization had grown to 2500 unions with 400,000 members in the United States and Canada, and that when McGuire died (1906) "carpenters received 40 cents an hour. Today they are paid \$1.50, with a five day, 40 hour week."

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<sup>164</sup> "Labor Day Founder Honored in Jersey: Pleas for Reunion of Labor Made at Grave of Peter J. McGuire." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. September 8, 1936. 4.

<sup>165</sup> Mrs. Kathryn Caya, Miss Lillian McGuire and Miss Myrtle McGuire of 331 Vine Street, Camden, NJ and two grand daughters, Miss Iris Caya and Miss Dorothy McGuire of 5065 Russell Avenue, Merchantville.

<sup>166</sup> "Labor Day Founder Honored at Grave," *The Evening Bulletin*, September 2, 1941.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 41

---

**1945**

See Historic Image 12 for McGuire family members and dignitaries at McGuire Gravesite on Labor Day 1945.

**1946**

The 1946 gathering included more than 200 persons and featured AFL representative Henry Iler demanding that atomic energy be used to lighten the tasks of labor. Iler, an associate of William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor declared: "New methods of production were discovered during the war and are being perfected. Labor insists that these great new discoveries must not be exploited for the benefit of the few." He also said that "The atomic age must make the human race a master of the new machines, not their slaves." The ceremony was directed by the Camden Carpenters Local 393 and included an address by Camden Mayor George E. Brunner.

**1947**

On September 1, 1947, representatives of the American Federation of Labor used the McGuire memorial service to denounce the Taft Hartley Act as "a crown of thorns placed on labor's brow."<sup>167</sup>

**1948**

At the 1948 Labor Day celebration at the grave of Peter McGuire, the President Secretary of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers lamented recent attempts to legislate the trade union movement out of existence. John P. Burke, whose address was delivered over a nationwide NBC network, reminded union members to follow McGuire's advice to learn to use their political power on their own behalf. He quoted McGuire as saying, "When the workers vote wrong on Election Day they place the power of the state into the hands of their enemies."

**1950**

Labor and political leaders turned the graveside of the "Father of Labor Day" into a platform to call on organized labor and the audience of about 100 standing among the tombstones to unseat in Congress all those who had proved to be its foes by passing what he called the "vicious" Taft-Hartley Act and who had created loopholes in the tax laws for a favored few to dodge their just and equal share of taxes.

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<sup>167</sup> "Taft Act Target at Labor Rites," clipping from unidentified newspaper in Rossell family files. The Taft-Hartley Act protected employees from restraint or coercion by unions, made closed shops illegal, prohibited unions from charging excessive dues or initiation fee, among other provisions (National Labor Relations Board, "1947 Taft-Hartley Act Substantive Provisions", <http://www.nlr.gov.who-we-are/our-history/1947-taft-hartley-substantive-provisions>).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 42

---

Archibald McVicker, one of the international officers of the AFL, concluded that "Labor asks only that everyone carry his just share... that while our boys are in Korea dodging bullets that we have no tax dodgers here."<sup>168</sup>

John Crean, a candidate for Congress noted that the great labor organizations which McGuire helped found today are in the forefront of the world battle against communism. He said, "We should remember that Peter J. McGuire at one time in his dynamic career was looked upon as a Marxist but that as he grew older and wiser he saw that communism could lead only to the police state, to the destruction of labor, to the death of human dignity, which he prized above all things in life. "

Congressman Charles Wolverton paid tribute to Peter J. McGuire in the House of Representatives noting that "it is appropriate that on each succeeding Labor Day, exercises are held in Arlington cemetery, located near the city of Camden, New Jersey, to honor Peter J. McGuire, known as the "Farther of Labor Day."<sup>169</sup>

McGuire's three daughters, Miss Myrtle McGuire, Miss Lillian McGuire, and Mrs. Kathryn Caya attended. Mrs. Caya, who remembered her father best, summed up in one sentence what the speakers took an hour to say: "He was a great little guy."<sup>170</sup> Mrs. Rossell's two year old daughter, Kathleen, laid a wreath on her great grandfather's tomb. A fifteen-piece orchestra composed of the American Federation of Musicians local 77, Philadelphia, gave a concert on the nearby grounds of the water works at Delair, where those taking part in the McGuire memorial gathered for a picnic lunch.

## 1951

Forty-six years after McGuire's death, as the anniversary of McGuire's Centennial birthday approached, the organizations he had helped found celebrated his birth year on a national basis. Issues of *The Carpenter*, the newspaper McGuire had started, now featured stories, pictures, and reminiscences of a leader who had been gone for decades.

At Arlington Cemetery, even as union membership and organizations grew in numbers and importance, the original monument to Peter J. McGuire came to be closely surrounded by other graves. The Carpenters Union decided it was time to erect a more fitting tribute to a man whose legacy and historical significance seemed to grow with each passing year. The United Brotherhood decided to install a new monument.

The 1951 Graveside Memorial had an attendance of about 200 and featured O. William Blaier, member of the executive board of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, announcing that a \$100,000 marble shrine with a life size statute of McGuire would be erected in Arlington Cemetery by the Union, with work

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<sup>168</sup> "Leaders Pay Tribute to Peter McGuire At Graveside Services in Arlington." *Courier Post*. September 4, 1950. 3.

<sup>169</sup> "Wolverton Offers Tribute in House to Peter McGuire." *Courier-Post*, September 6, 1950,.10. Wolverton said McGuire was "born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1852."

<sup>170</sup> "Labor Day Father Honored at Grave." *The New York Times*. September 5, 1950. 16.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 43

---

completed by July 6, 1952, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of McGuire's birth. (See Historic Image 13, an Initial Design Sketch for the P.J. McGuire Memorial.)

The new monument would include a central statue of McGuire, carved in Cherokee Georgia marble, embraced by a semi-circular colonnade of marble columns in the simple, Greek Doric style. The inscription on the colonnade states, "In Memory of Peter J. McGuire Founder of the U.B.C. and J. of A. and Father of Labor Day." McGuire's statue was carved in Georgia marble using power tools by John Guarente at his 2508 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street Studio in Philadelphia. Guarantee was a sculptor/carver on Washington's National Cathedral focused on its gargoyles.<sup>171</sup>

Labor leaders gathered at the grave also learned that a \$4.5 million Federal housing project would be started in October and completed before McGuire's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on July 6.

## 1952

Several thousand people, many of them ordinary union members, attended the memorial dedication ceremony on Aug. 9, 1952 (Historic Image 14 – Dedication Brochure Photo of the Peter J. McGuire Memorial after construction). Vincent Caya, McGuire's grandson, unveiled the Peter J. McGuire statue (Historic Image 15). Other McGuire family members present included his two daughters, Mrs. Kathryn Caya and Miss Lillian McGuire, and two granddaughters, Mrs. Iris Rossell and Mrs. Dorothy Dougherty.

Speakers included the President of the New Jersey Federation of Labor, the mayors of Camden and Pennsauken, General President Hutcheson of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the President of the American Federation of Labor, William Green, the secretary and treasurer of the American Federation of Labor (who later attained near legendary status himself) George Meany, and the U.S. Secretary of Labor, Maurice Tobin. Tobin said, "If Samuel Gompers gave to the American Federation of Labor its practical wisdom, Peter J. McGuire gave it its fighting spirit. Gompers was mind and spirit, but mind came first. In McGuire it was the spirit that held the upper hand."<sup>172</sup>

The speeches from the dedication of the Memorial are on file in the Special Collections and University Archives repository at the University of Maryland Library. An audio recording of the speeches is available online.<sup>173</sup> VHS videotape recordings of the August 1952 memorial dedication are also available at the University.

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<sup>171</sup> For more information, see Margorie Hunt's interviews in *The Stone Carvers: Master Carvers of Washington National Cathedral*, a documentary film by Paul Wagner that won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject in 1985. Hunt adapted to her work into book of the same name published by the Smithsonian Press in 1999. Guarente's caricature of master carver Roger Morigi is one of the Cathedral's most popular sculptures.

<sup>172</sup> "McGuire Extolled as Labor Leader." *The New York Times*. August 10, 1952. 44.

<sup>173</sup> See: <https://digital.lib.umd.edu/video?pid=umd:690664>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 44

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McGuire's successor as secretary of the Carpenters, Frank Duffy, recalled his associations with Peter McGuire at the ceremony.<sup>174</sup> He noted McGuire's organization of the Brotherhood, his proposal of Labor Day "as one festal day for tribute to the genius of American Industry" that should be "dedicated to peace, civilization, and the triumphs of industry... to honor the Toilers of the Earth who from rude nature have carved all the grandeur we behold." He noted McGuire's leadership in the eight-hour day movement. And he described McGuire as "a great fellow – a wonderful man – active, wide-awake, and up to date on everything that affected wage earners." He said he was well educated, well read and well balanced and "was of a rather quiet and retiring disposition – the gentleman of Labor." He said he was opposed to strikes, was a good speaker and brilliant orator, a great debater and good writer. He said he had a charming personality and a pleasant disposition, full of wit and humor who could turn meetings into friendly, entertaining, educational affairs.<sup>175</sup>

Hutcheson declared the carpenter's Brotherhood had recognized the dangers of communism long before the "current open difficulty between this country and Russia." Tobin declared both McGuire and Gompers were socialist theorists in their younger days, but came to learn "the answer to the problems of American labor were not to be found in the American labor movement, but inside it." He said "They learned that the challenge of labor was not to tear down our private enterprise system but to strengthen it and see that a greater share of its benefits could go to the workers."<sup>176</sup>

The first service since the monument was dedicated featured a driving rain and two main speakers: Mayor George Brunner of Camden and Archibald S. Alexander, Democratic candidate for the United States Senate. Alexander called for a revision of the Taft-Hartley Law that will give the working man a fair break.

## 1954

Congressman Charles R. Howell, Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate, told 150 workers and labor leaders that the free labor movement was "one of the soundest bulwarks against communism" at the 60<sup>th</sup> annual memorial services honoring Peter J. McGuire "The Father of Labor Day" in 1954 at Arlington Cemetery.<sup>177</sup> Howell said "one of the greatest debts we owe to Peter J. McGuire is that he helped construct an early and formidable bulwark against socialism and communism in America." Howell also said that the atomic-hydrogen age holds promise for a better civilization and the triumph of industry." Other speakers included O. William Blaier, second general vice president of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, Joseph J. McComb, Central Labor Union president, David Brooks, Pennsauken Committee member, and John Jordan, Philadelphia area AFL representative. Blaier called for curtailing imports from cheap labor countries, increasing the

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<sup>174</sup> Frank Duffy led the campaign to force McGuire to resign and to reimburse unaccounted for funds.

<sup>175</sup> Reprint of Frank Duffy's remarks at McGuire ceremonies on August 9, 1952, Rossell family collection.

<sup>176</sup> "McGuire Praised as Labor Unveils Pioneer's Statue," *Courier Post*, August 11, 1952.

<sup>177</sup> "Father of Labor Day Memorialized: Union Leader Calls for Rededication to Principles of Peter J. McGuire" *Courier Post*, September 7, 1954, 3.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 45

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purchasing power of working people by reducing their taxes, and building decent highways to cut down the awful slaughter of traffic accidents.

McGuire's two daughters, Miss Lillian McGuire and Mrs. Kathleen Caya, attended the services.

From Trenton, Governor Meyner traced the history of Labor Day from its first celebration in New York to its current status as the only holiday officially recognized by Congress and all the states of the Union. He said, "The Labor Day holiday holds a special significance for us because of the historic part played by a pioneer trade unionist, Peter J. McGuire." Governor Meyner also said, "Deserved reference has been made to him as the founder of Labor Day and, as a result of his pioneer efforts, New Jersey was the second state in the union to enact legislation setting up general observance of Labor Day as a legal holiday."

### 1956

When the U.S. Postal Service announced near the end of 1955 that it would issue a stamp honoring Labor Day, the leaders of the 1956 Labor Day observances began to make big plans. Several thousand spectators were expected to witness the opening ceremonies honoring Peter J. McGuire since the first day sale of Labor Day stamps would occur exclusively at the Camden post office attracting stamp dealers and collectors from across the country. Sales of 600,000 Labor Day stamps were projected.<sup>178</sup>

The day's plan called for sales of the stamp at the Camden post office at 7:00 a.m., with an official dedication ceremony by postal service officials at 9:00 a.m and featuring the playing of the *National Anthem* by an orchestra composed of Local 77, AFM, Musicians at the Camden Post Office.

Labor Day 1956 was also special because it was the first celebration that found the two great labor organizations of the nation united under the banner of AFL-CIO.

From the Camden post office, a motorcade bearing the VIPs would proceed to Arlington Cemetery for the wreath laying at the memorial to Peter J. McGuire at 11:00 a.m. and then a return to Camden for a luncheon for 400 at Kenney's. The observances that day would also have special significance for the labor movement, as it was the first since the merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organization.

The carefully planned order of events were upstaged when President Eisenhower decided to have a dedication ceremony of his own for the new stamp on Saturday, Sept. 1 at the White House. The President had received an invitation to the Camden ceremonies from Peter J. McGuire's great granddaughter, Jo Ann Dougherty of Pennsauken. However, the press of world affairs and a political campaign made a Presidential visit impractical.

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<sup>178</sup> "City Prepares to Greet Thousands In Biggest Labor Day Observance," *Courier Post*, September 1, 1956 p. 3

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 46

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Therefore, Ike invited members of the Dougherty family to join him instead for the early ceremony at the White House<sup>179</sup> (Historic Images 16 and 17).

Ten guests were presented stamp albums autographed by Postmaster General Summerfield of first issue stamps, including Mrs. Kathryn McGuire Caya, McGuire's daughter. Assistant Postmaster General Robertson said the Labor Day stamp pays homage to the men and women who by their labor and diligence have built for the United States "the highest standards of living ever enjoyed anywhere in the world." He also said, "Some years ago the Memorial Committee of your Central Labor Union called Peter J. McGuire a 'forgotten giant.' No longer is this giant a forgotten man. The ceremonies at the White House and here today add further glory to the luster which surrounds his name among all working men and their friends the world over."<sup>180</sup>

Rocco C. Siciliano, Assistant Secretary of Labor, read a message by Labor Secretary James P. Mitchell who regretted not being able to be present. On his behalf, Siciliano said "This stamp, the first ever issued to honor America's working people, is in itself a rebuttal to that philosophy that would make man a chattel to impersonal organizations."<sup>181</sup>

Congressman Wolverton, who helped arrange for James J. McComb, president of the CLU, to preside over the post office and memorial services and to have the descendants of Peter J. McGuire be present at the White House ceremonies, delivered the Labor Day address at the Memorial.

### **1957**

On September 2, 1957, New Jersey Governor Robert B. Meyner told a gathering of 300 at the annual Labor Day exercises that much was needed to be done for labor in New Jersey noting that union members and their families make up a third of the country's population. He noted that enemies of labor have used recent stories about racketeers and hoodlums victimizing the rank and file of labor are being used as an effort to discredit all unionism, but that they would not succeed. Meyner spoke of McGuire as a great "labor statesman" and an organizer of unions who opposed strife between management and labor. Because of his success in settling strikes, Meyner said, McGuire became known as the "Great Arbitrator."<sup>182</sup> McGuire daughters Mrs. Catherine Caya and Lillian McGuire assisted Meyner in laying a wreath at the foot of the Memorial.

### **1958**

Harrison Williams, Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate from New Jersey was the principal speaker at the 64<sup>th</sup> annual Labor Day memorial service. He said the families of the 18 million AFL CIO members constituted

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<sup>179</sup> <http://allaroundpennsauken.com/a-special-postage-stamp-for-labor-day-1956/#.Wpx5b1Twbcs>

<sup>180</sup> "Special Stamp Cites Founder of Labor Day," *Courier Post*, September 4, 1956, 2.

<sup>181</sup> "Special Stamp Cites Founder of Labor Day," *Courier Post*, September 4, 1956, 2.

<sup>182</sup> "Meyner Lauds McGuire as Labor Leader," *Courier Post*, September 3, 1957, 6

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 47

---

nearly half the population of the United States, so when “we speak of labor... we are speaking of the American people.” Harrison bemoaned recent Senate committee labor investigations asserting that “Leaders who pervert the cause of unionism to line their own pockets and to seize dictatorial power not only are traitors to the rank and file, they also give aid and comfort to union’s enemies.”<sup>183</sup> Williams called right to work laws “right to scab” laws and said they strike at the very heart of unionism. Honored guests also included McGuire’s daughters, Kathryn and Lillian, both of Collingswood.

**1959**

President Eisenhower’s Secretary of Labor, James P. Mitchell, was the featured speaker at the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Labor Day at the McGuire shrine in 1959. Mitchell contrasted the prosperity of the American people and their “the single most remarkable achievement in man’s entire economic history” with the “barbarian” system of Communism. Mitchell said, “Here in the United States we find, for the first time in man’s history, a wealthy society in which the wealth is produced by the willing labor of free men, is distributed by the free decision of those who produce it, and is enjoyed by the vast majority of people.”<sup>184</sup>

Mitchell urged organized labor to work toward improving conditions for migrant farm workers. “This is one area in which the working force needs to help in obtaining minimum standards of legislation,” he said. “The low economic status of the migrant farm worker stands in shameful contrast to labor’s general well being.”<sup>185</sup>

**1962**

The 68<sup>th</sup> annual Labor Day memorial services honoring McGuire featured the president of the International Union of Electrical Workers and AFL-CIO vice president, James B. Carey, who spoke about how, eighty years after McGuire launched a successful fight for an eight-hour day, modern labor leaders are battling to establish the 35 hour week.<sup>186</sup>

**1963**

New Jersey State Commissioner of Labor, Raymond F. Male was the lead speaker at the wreath laying ceremony. He was joined by Camden Mayor Pierce, Joseph J. McComb, president of the Central Labor Union, and Mrs. Iris Rossell and Vincent Caya, grandchildren of McGuire.

**1964**

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<sup>183</sup> “On Labor Day: Leaders Pay Tribute to P.J. McGuire,” *Courier Post*, September 2, 1958. 12.

<sup>184</sup> “Mitchell at McGuire Shrine Contrasts U.S., Red Labor,” *Inquirer*, September 8, 1959.

<sup>185</sup> “Labor is Urged to Aid Migrants.” *The Sun*. September 8, 1959. 4.

<sup>186</sup> “35-Hour Week Eyed by Carey,” *Courier Post*, September 4, 1962, p.23

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 48

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The annual Labor Day ceremony at McGuire's monument featured speeches by two United States Senators, a number of labor leaders, and local elected officials. Sen. Harrison Williams brought a personal message from President Johnson and Senator Clifford Case stressed his beliefs in the precepts of the working man. Robert Gray of the Metropolitan District Council of Carpenters criticized Senator Goldwater and the Republican platform as a "grave threat to labor" and said labor had been forced into the political arena this year conducting registration campaigns.

McGuire grandson Vincent Caya and granddaughter Iris Rossell joined Brotherhood Local 8 president Joseph Gressan and Central Labor Union president Joseph J. McComb in placing a wreath on the monument "to the Father of Labor Day."<sup>187</sup>

**1965**

Governor Richard L. Hughes and Senator Clifford P. Case led the 71<sup>st</sup> annual memorial services for Peter J. McGuire.

**1966**

The 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Labor Day Memorial Service on September 6, 1966, featured U.S. Senator Clifford Case urging the administration of President Lyndon Johnson to establish a program to stop inflation. Case said McGuire would be disturbed if he were alive today to see how inflation reduces the purchasing power of those who can least afford it, and that the purchasing power of the average factory worker's weekly paycheck fell \$1.37 in a single month this year.<sup>188</sup> Case urged Johnson to do something before having to resort to price controls.

**1967**

Labor Day 1967 featured an open debate over the founder of Labor Day at the ceremonies at the grave site of Peter J. McGuire. Joseph McComb, president of the Central Labor Union of Camden denied a story in the *Paterson Morning Call* that former Paterson alderman Matthew Maguire, who once ran for U.S. Vice President on the Socialist Labor party ticket, was the actual founder of the holiday.<sup>189</sup> Speaking at McGuire's gravesite, McComb said his union had a great deal of material on McGuire and claimed he "definitely" was the founder of Labor Day. He said "We will debate the validity of our claim with anyone," adding that the argument reminded him of a "jurisdictional dispute."

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<sup>187</sup> Jubanyik, Elaine, "Labor Day Founder: Rites Honor Peter J. McGuire," *Courier Post*, September 8, 1965.

<sup>188</sup> "Case Asks Program to Stop Inflation," *Courier Post*, September 6, 1966, 28.

<sup>189</sup> "McGuire the One, McComb Insists," *Courier Post*, September 5, 1967, 15.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 49

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The *Morning Call's* Murray Zukoff researched the founder question at the urging of Mrs. Doris Atherton, Matthew Maguire's granddaughter.<sup>190</sup> He found that the former alderman was a delegate to the same convention as Peter J. McGuire and was chosen a member of a three man committee, also with McGuire, to set up the Central Labor Union. He found articles in the *Paterson People*, published in 1890, stating that Maguire conceived the plan of a day of rest for working people in 1882 – at the same meeting where McGuire earned credit for proposing the holiday. Zukoff also uncovered Maguire's obituary in a 1917 issue of the *Morning Call* referring to Maguire unequivocally as "the founder of Labor Day.

Other speakers at McGuire's Labor Day ceremony were Senator Case, Rep. John Hunt, Mayor James H. J. Tate, Philadelphia, Alfred R. Pierce, mayor of Camden, and State Labor Commissioner Raymond Male.

## 1968

Senator Clifford Case told 200 people gathered at Arlington Cemetery for the 74<sup>th</sup> annual Labor Day memorial service that help for the poor will not result in deprivation for those who are only slightly better off. He called for a reform of the tax structure, closing loopholes and spreading the burden to a greater degree to those who can bear it with the least possible hardship."<sup>191</sup> Two dozen officials, politicians and family members were introduced during the one hour and 40-minute ceremony. Congressman John Hunt warned the audience of the continuing "Communist menace" in the world. Camden Mayor Alfred R. Pierce challenged organized labor to come out of hiding and lead in helping the people. Joseph J. McComb, president of the Central Labor Union of Camden County, was master of ceremonies. The morning memorial was followed by a luncheon at Kenny's Camden.

## Recognition of McGuire's national stature

### Cargo ship:

In 1942 the Kaiser Richmond shipyard #2 built the SS *Peter J. McGuire* was built for dry, break bulk cargo for the United States Maritime Commission.<sup>192</sup> The McGuire was one of five ships launched that were named for labor leaders.

### Low rent housing project:

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<sup>190</sup> Atherton said it was significant that after the convention her grandfather was mentioned repeatedly in connection with Labor Day, but McGuire not mentioned at all except in the minutes of the convention.

<sup>191</sup> Himmelein, John, "Workers Urged to Fight Bias: Case Says Poverty War Won't Harm Others," September 3, 1968, p. 9

<sup>192</sup> For more information on the ship see <https://kaiserpermanentehistory.org/latest/world-war-ii-kaiser-ships-named-for-labor-leaders/>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ**

Section number 8 Page 50

---

In February 1952 the Housing Authority of the City of Camden held groundbreaking ceremonies at the site of its new 368 unit \$4.5 million housing project, the Peter J. Maguire Gardens, at Boyd and Berwick Streets.<sup>193</sup> Camden officials decided to name the federal low rent housing project in East Camden as a tribute to McGuire who was born 100 years before the dedication. The chairman of the Authority, Joseph J. McComb, said that authority members and Camden Mayor Brunner took the action just before the annual observance of Labor Day, noting that “ever since McGuire’s passing, labor leaders, friends and citizens made a pilgrimage to the last resting place of Mr. McGuire... to pay tribute to his memory.” He also said, “It is fitting that this new project, one that will be rated amount the finest and most modern in the nation, should be named as a lasting memorial to the man and citizen who is regarded as the emancipator of workers of the nation and the world.”<sup>194</sup> Groundbreaking speakers included Archibald Alexander, Undersecretary of the Army and William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor. Guests included Philadelphia’s Mayor Clark and Camden’s Mayor Brunner.

**Labor Day stamp:**

In 1956, when a new postage stamp dedicated to American labor was issued at Labor Day, President Dwight Eisenhower held a special ceremony at the White House in which he met with family and descendants of Peter J. McGuire, including his great-granddaughter Jo Ann McGuire Dougherty of Pennsauken, New Jersey.+--

The stamp was designed by Victor J. McCloskey, Jr., a long-time artist for the Bureau of Engraving, who had previously produced the postage stamp depicting the flag-raising on Iwo Jima. The depiction was based on a large mosaic in the new AFL building in Washington, D.C. by the renowned muralist Lumen M. Winter. It showed a laboring man with his family. He held four tools: an axe, a hoe, a pick, and a sledgehammer slung over his shoulder. A length of rope hung from his arm; his other arm is around his wife, who holds a book open as their son reads from it. In the corner of the picture is a quote from the British essayist Thomas Carlyle, “Labor Is Life.”

**Eugene Debs Museum Marker:**

In 1990 the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America erected the Peter J. McGuire Marker in Terre Haute, Indiana in the backyard of the Eugene Debs home (museum).<sup>195</sup>

**Department of Labor National Labor Hall of Fame:**

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<sup>193</sup> For more information n McGuire Gardens Housing Project see <http://www.dvrbs.com/hacc/CamdenNJ-McGuireGrdns.htm>

<sup>194</sup> “Camden to Name Housing Project for McGuire,” clipping from unidentified newspaper, Rossell family files.

<sup>195</sup> See <http://www.hmdb.org/PhotoFullSize.asp?PhotoID=215795>

[http://www.historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HM13P5\\_peter-j-mcguire\\_Terre-Haute-IN.html](http://www.historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HM13P5_peter-j-mcguire_Terre-Haute-IN.html)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 51

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In 2004, Peter J. McGuire was admitted to the national Labor Hall of Fame of the U.S. Department of Labor, since renamed the Hall of Honor.

DRAFT

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 9 Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number 10 Page 1

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## Verbal Boundary Description:

The Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite are located in the southeast section of Arlington Cemetery at 1620 Cove Road, Pennsauken, New Jersey less than a mile east of the Delaware River. The Arlington Cemetery is bound on southeast by the Bethel Cemetery (which borders Westfield Avenue and Cove Road), on the west and northwest by a hedge along Cove and River Roads, and on the northeast by a corridor of trees that buffer the cemetery and five commercial buildings along Bethel Avenue. The Arlington Cemetery is located in Block 1001, Lot 14, of the Pennsauken Tax Maps.

The locations of the Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite are shown on the Arlington Cemetery Map.

## Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the nominated area of these resources were established by staff of the NJ Historic Preservation Office on August 10, 2017. The boundaries are depicted on the location map included with this nomination.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number      Photos      Page   1  

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## Current photo log:

1. Name of property: Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite
2. County and State: Camden County, New Jersey
3. Photographer: Robert A. Shinn
4. Dates of Photographs: September 1 and 9, 2017
5. Location of digital file: Residence of Robert A. Shinn in Cherry Hill, New Jersey

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet****Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ**Section number      Photos      Page   2  **Current photos list:**

<b>Photo No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>View Direction</b>
1	P.J. McGuire Gravesite with Memorial in background 9/1/17	North from south side of grave's headstone.
2	Arlington Cemetery Marker near entrance and office 9/9/17	Northwest from graveyard office entrance drive.
3	Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone 9/9/17	East from west side of grave's headstone.
4	Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone Base 9/9/17	East from west side of grave's headstone.
5	Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone Second State 9/9/17	East from west side of grave's headstone.
6	Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone Greek Cross 9/9/17	East from west side of grave's headstone.
7	Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone East Face 9/9/17	West from east side of grave's headstone.
8	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Statue and Colonnade 9/9/17	North from south side of circular driveway near east end of the South Main Avenue driveway.
9	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Statue and Colonnade 9/9/17	North by northeast from southwest rim of the circular driveway around the Memorial.
10	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Statue 9/9/17	East from south side of statute.
11	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Statue detail 9/9/17	East from south side of statute.
12	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Colonnade 9/9/17	North from south end of the Memorial Colonnade.
13	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Colonnade Base Detail 9/9/17	North from the south side of the Colonnade.
14	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Colonnade End Column Detail 9/9/17	North from south side of the Colonnade.
15	Peter J. McGuire Memorial Colonnade End Column Detail UBCJA Shield 9/9/17	North from south side of the Colonnade.
16	Governor Philip Murphy and Representative Donald J. Norcross at McGuire Memorial 123 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Peter J. McGuire Labor Day	North from south side of Memorial's circular driveway



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

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	Observance 9/1/17	
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DRAFT

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

Historic Images Page 1

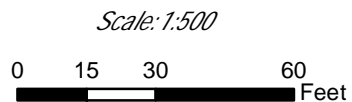
## Historic Images List

No.	Subject	Source
1.	<b>First Labor Day Parade, September 5, 1882 New York City, New York</b>	Frank Leslie's <i>Weekly Illustrated Newspaper</i> , September 16, 1882
2.	<b>8-Hour March, June 10, 1872</b>	Frank Leslie's <i>Weekly Illustrated Newspaper</i> , June 29, 1872
3.	<b>Tompkins Square, Riot in 1874</b>	Frank Leslie's <i>Weekly Illustrated Newspaper</i> , January 31, 1874
4.	<b>P.J. McGuire, Cincinnati, October 1877</b>	Kathleen Rossell (McGuire family collection)
5.	<b>P.J. McGuire, Zurich, October 1881</b>	Kathleen Rossell
6.	<b>McGuire Family, Sadie, P.J., Lillian, Teenie, Kathryn</b>	Kathleen Rossell
7.	<b>P.J. McGuire, Circa 1903</b>	Kathleen Rossell
8.	<b>American Federation of Labor, 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Resolution</b>	Kathleen Rossell
9.	<b>P.J. McGuire Gravesite, 1906</b>	Kathleen Rossell
10.	<b>P.J. McGuire Gravesite, Labor Day 1916</b>	Kathleen Rossell
11.	<b>P.J. McGuire Gravesite, Labor Day 1937</b>	Kathleen Rossell
12.	<b>P.J. McGuire Gravesite, Labor Day 1945</b>	Kathleen Rossell
13.	<b>P.J. McGuire Memorial, Initial Design Sketch, 1948</b>	Kathleen Rossell
14.	<b>The Peter J. McGuire Memorial, Brochure, Aug. 9, 1952</b>	Kathleen Rossell
15.	<b>Vincent Caya unveils McGuire statue, Aug. 9, 1952</b>	<i>Courier Post</i> , Camden, N.J. August 11, 1952
16.	<b>President Dwight D. Eisenhower Presenting Labor Day Stamp</b>	Kathleen Rossell
17.	<b>Autographed Broadside for Ceremonies on Special United States Postage Stamp Commemorating Labor Day and Exercises Honoring Peter J. McGuire – "Father of Labor Day"</b>	Kathleen Rossell





**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**

National Register Nomination  
 Arlington Cemetery  
 1629 Cove Road  
 Pennsauken Township  
 Camden County, New Jersey



**Legend**

-  NR Boundary
-  Tax Parcels

0.27 Acres



*NJDEP  
 Historic Preservation Office  
 April 2018*



B1101/L14

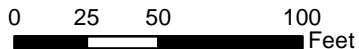
B1101/L13

2 At Gate to Arlington Cemetery




### Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite

New Jersey and National Registers Nomination  
 Arlington Cemetery  
 1629 Cove Road  
 Pennsauken Township  
 Camden County, New Jersey

Scale: 1:800



### Legend

-  NR Boundary
-  Photo Location
-  Tax Parcels

0.27 Acres



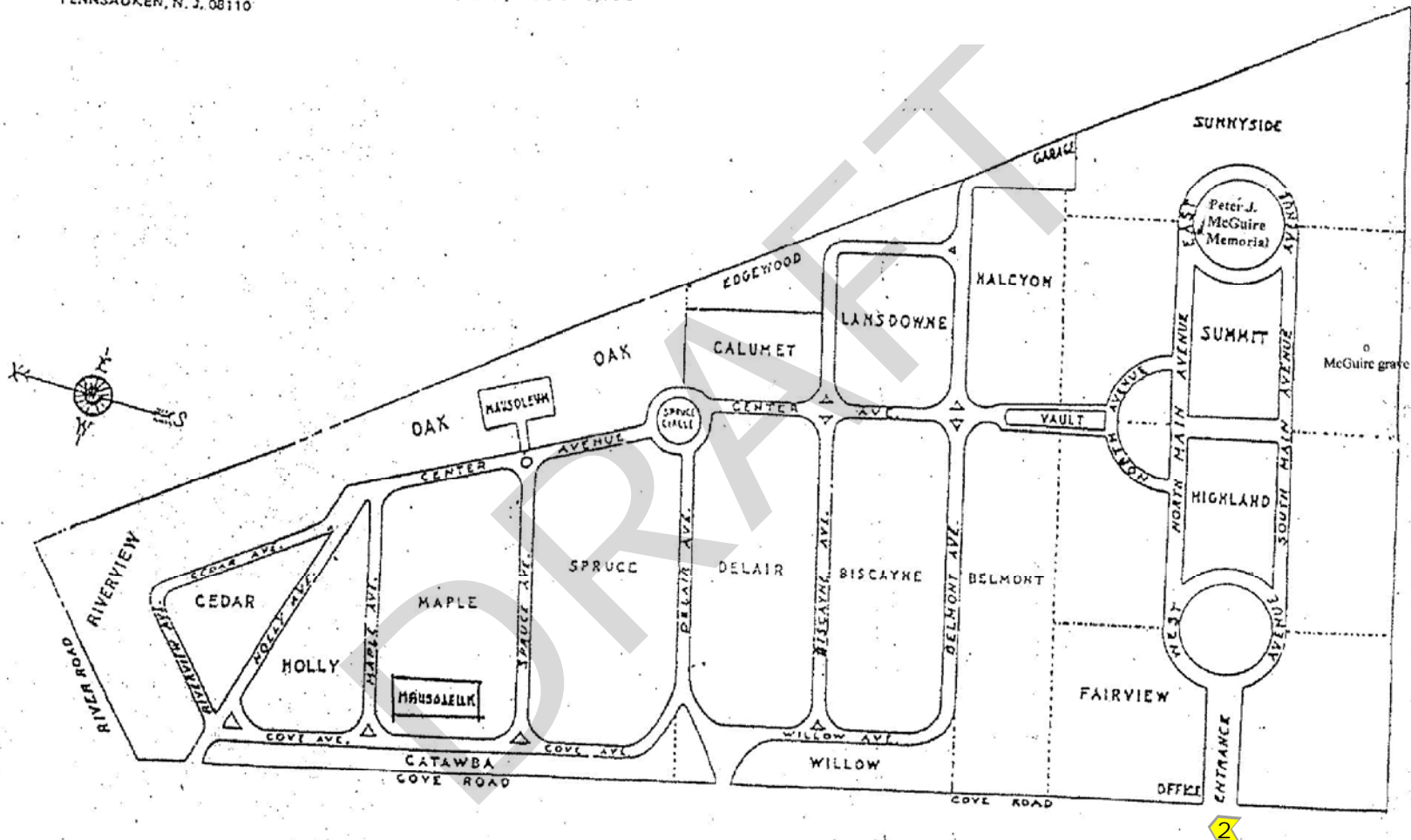
*NJDEP  
 Historic Preservation Office  
 April 2018*



# Arlington Cemetery

1620 COVE ROAD  
PENNSAUKEN, N. J. 08110

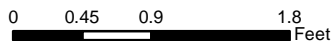
PHONE: (856) 663-5100



## Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite

New Jersey and National Registers Nomination  
Arlington Cemetery  
1629 Cove Road  
Pennsauken Township  
Camden County, New Jersey

Scale: 1:15



### Legend

 Photo location

NA Acres

NJDEP,  
Historic Preservation Office  
April 2018

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 1**



**First Labor Day Parade  
September 5, 1882  
New York City, New York**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 2



**8-Hour March  
June 10, 1872**



Tompkins Square  
Riot in 1874



**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 4**



**P.J. McGuire  
Cincinnati  
October 1877**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 5**



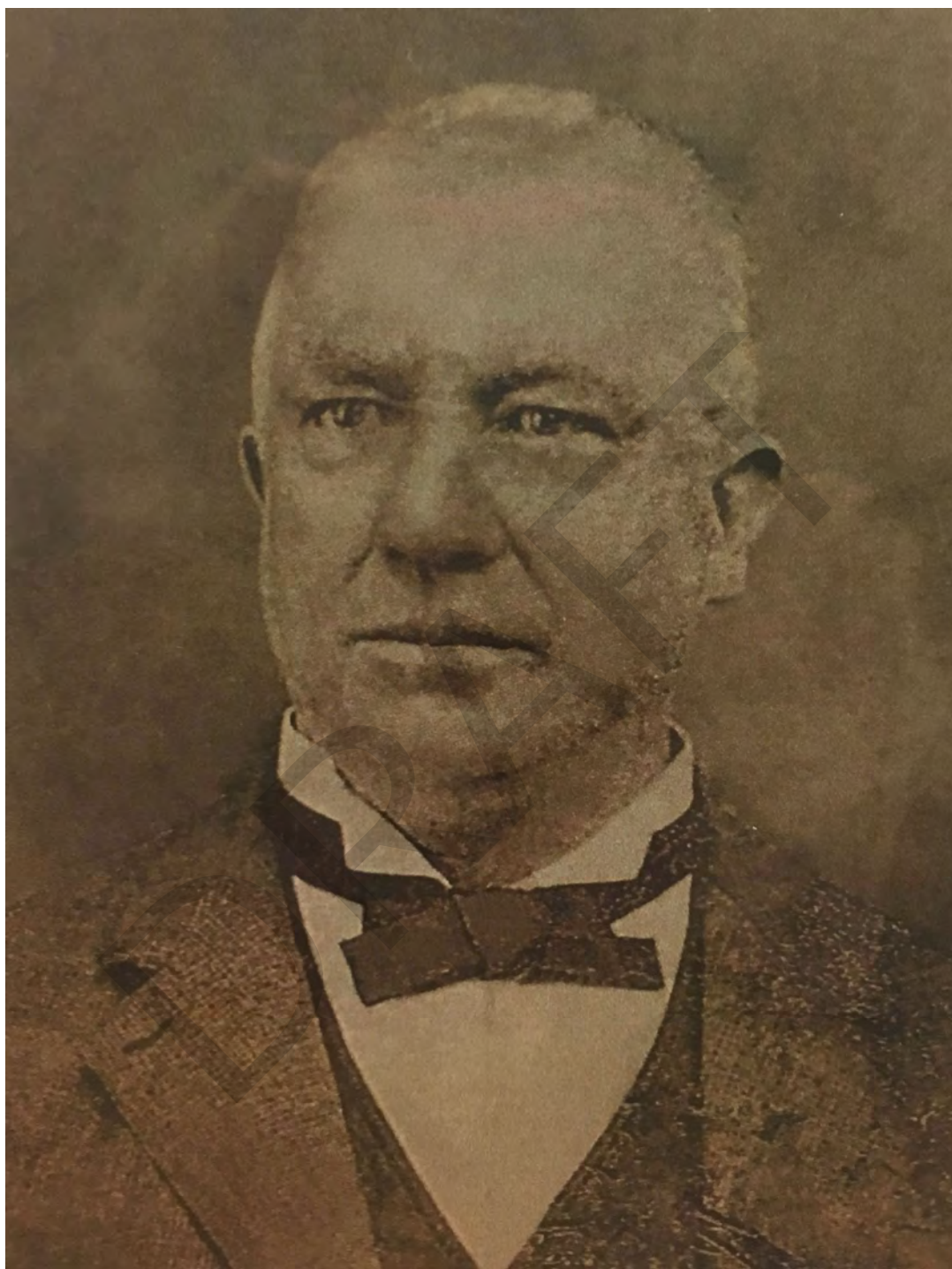
**P.J. McGuire  
Zurich  
October 1881**



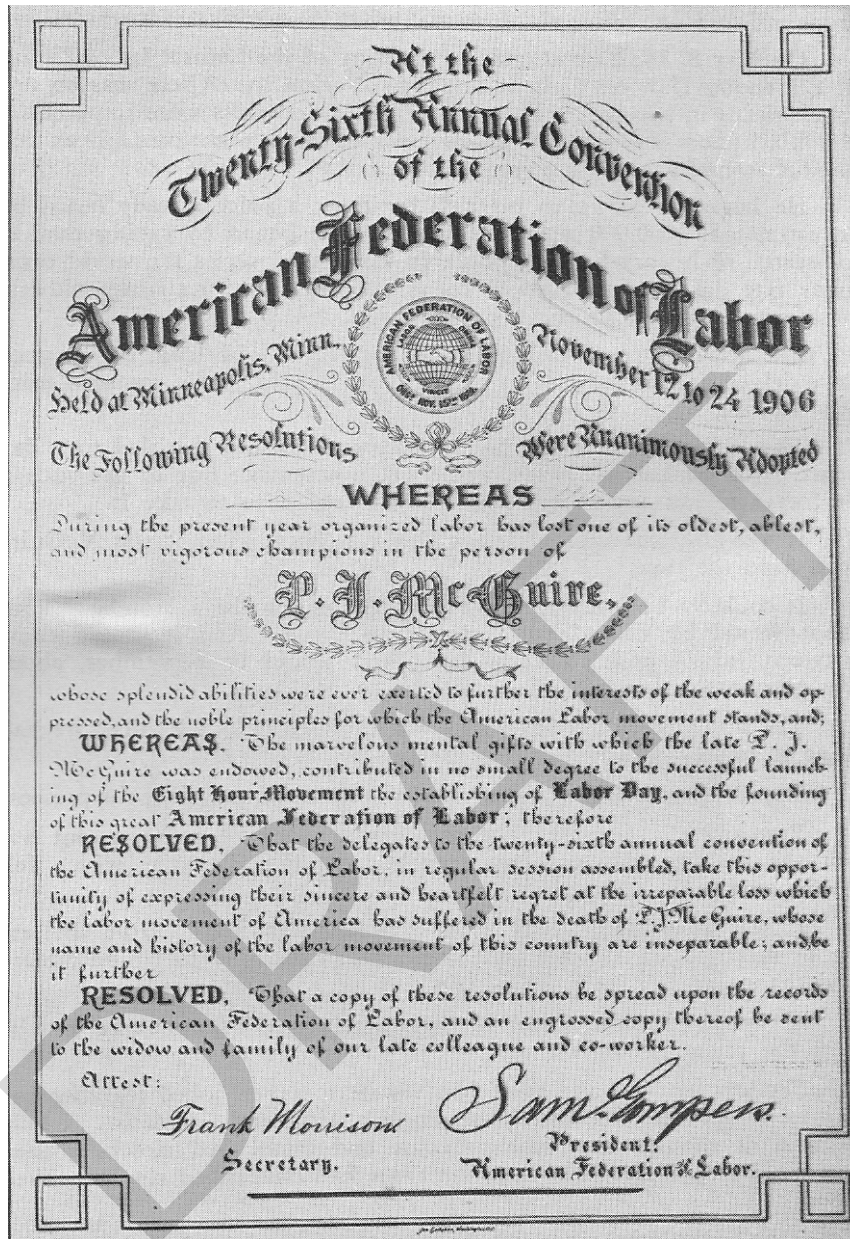


**McGuire Family**  
**Sadie – standing**  
**P.J., Lillian, Teenie holding Kathryn – seated**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 7**



**P.J. McGuire  
Circa 1903**



American Federation of Labor  
Twenty Sixth Annual Convention  
Memorial Resolution  
On the loss of  
P.J. McGuire  
November 12 to 24, 1906

Credits P.J. McGuire “in no small degree to the successful launching of the Eight Hour Movement, the establishing of Labor Day, and the founding of this great American Federation of Labor



**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 9**



**P.J. McGuire Gravesite  
1906**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 10**



**P.J. McGuire Gravesite  
Labor Day 1916**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 11**



**P.J. McGuire Gravesite  
Labor Day 1937**



Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 12



**P.J. McGuire Gravesite  
Labor Day 1945**



**P.J. McGuire Memorial  
Initial Design Sketch  
1948**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 14



Design Copyright, O. J. Hanson

*The Peter J. McGuire Memorial*

ARLINGTON CEMETERY, PENNSAUKEN  
TOWNSHIP, MERCHANTVILLE, N. J.  
*Dedicated August 9, 1952*

**The Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Dedication Brochure Photo  
August 9, 1952**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Historic Image 15



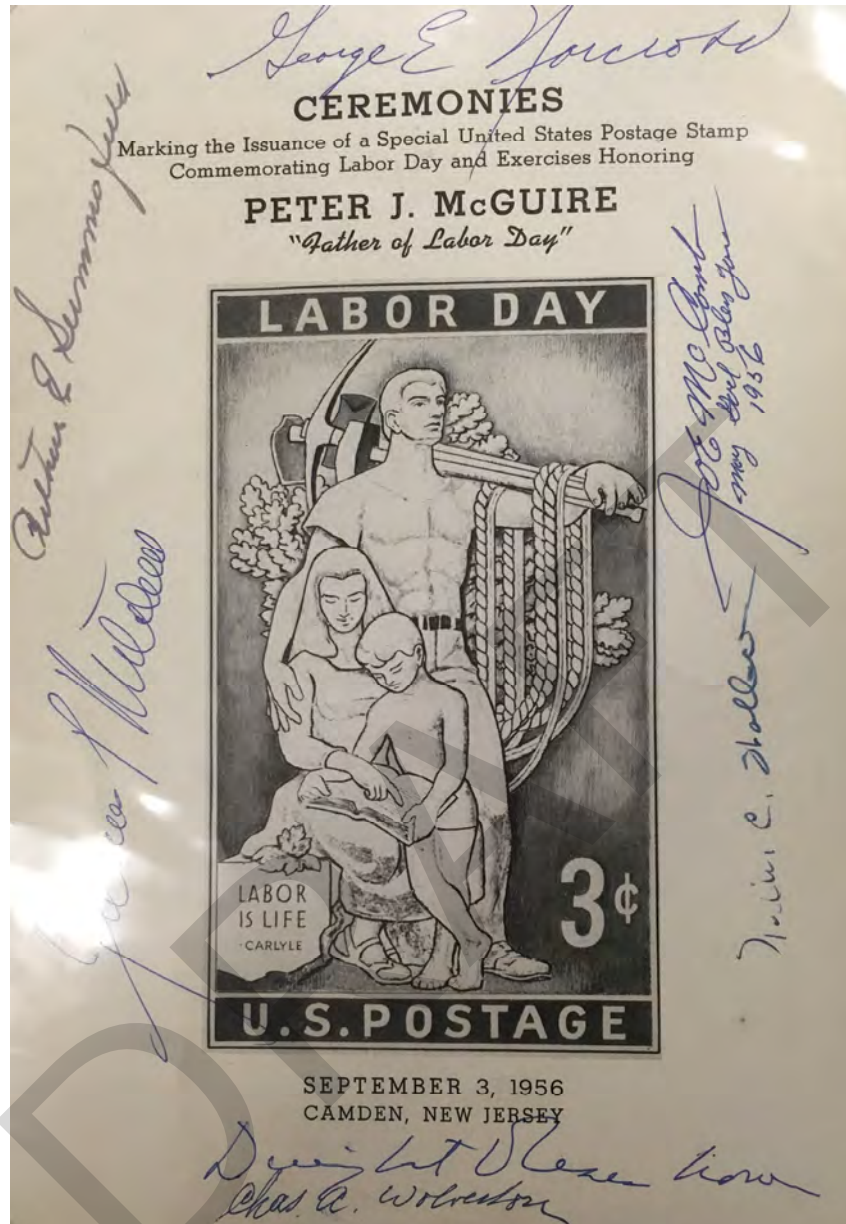
**Vincent Caya, grandson of  
Peter J. McGuire  
Unveils his statue at Arlington Cemetery  
August 9, 1952**



**President Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Presenting Labor Day Stamp  
to  
Peter J. McGuire's great granddaughter,  
Jo Ann Dougherty  
September 1, 1956  
at the  
White House, Washington, D.C.**

**Cancelled stamp on postcard dated  
September 8, 1956**





**Autographed Broadside for Ceremonies  
Marking the Issuance of a Special United States Postage Stamp  
Commemorating Labor Day and Exercises Honoring  
Peter J. McGuire - "Father of Labor Day"**

**Includes autographs of:  
Dwight D. Eisenhower (President of the United States)  
Arthur E. Summerfield (Postmaster General)  
Charles A. Wolverton (Congressman)  
James J. McComb (President of the Central Labor Union)  
George E. Norcross (Central Labor Union)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   1  

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## **Appendix A: Comparative Analysis of Known Properties Associated with Peter J. McGuire**

A gravesite of a historical figure of outstanding importance is only eligible for listing if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his/her productive life. A comparative analysis of known properties associated with Peter J. McGuire in New York City, New Haven Connecticut, St. Louis Missouri, Cleveland, Ohio, Philadelphia Pennsylvania, and Camden New Jersey was first completed and submitted to the NJ State Historic Preservation Office with a Preliminary Application on July 11, 2017.

The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office subsequently reviewed the list of homes, offices, and sites of significant public demonstrations below and, by letter dated August 11, 2017, concluded that the majority of sites appear to have been obliterated while others could no longer adequately represent McGuire's contributions to American Labor History and, therefore, that "McGuire's gravesite is eligible under Criterion B and meets Criteria Consideration C."

### **Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite, Arlington Cemetery, Pennsauken, NJ**

The property's direct, historical association with Peter J. McGuire as a figure of transcendent national importance in the labor history of the United States is well documented. The landscape characteristics, physical features, and overall layout and visual appearance of the McGuire memorial and gravesite reflect a high degree of overall integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. The local chapter of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners purchased the grave lot and family headstone for the McGuire family. The sculptural representations of McGuire and labor and union themes associated with his career as an effective labor leader and organizer that embellish the memorial and gravesite, are intact and well preserved. Perhaps most important is the fact that national political and labor leaders and thousands of workers and families have made annual pilgrimages to the grave since 1906 and to the memorial and grave since 1952 every year on Labor Day or the Friday before Labor Day. Unlike other known properties related to McGuire, his memorial and gravesite is the only one that retains both the necessary direct association with McGuire as a person of national stature and the high level of integrity required for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. The property satisfies the criteria for graves of historical figures and properties under category (c.) "a grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his or her productive life and (f.) "A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance."<sup>1</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   2  

---

## Lower East Side, New York City, NY

McGuire was “probably” born in a lower east side tenement in New York City on July 6, 1852 to parents John J. McGuire and Catherine Hand O’Riley, both Irish immigrants, who had married in 1850. The house and place of birth “is now forgotten.”<sup>2</sup> Rede’s Directory of New York City for 1854-55 has an entry for John McGuire, 273 East 13<sup>th</sup> Street. This is the only John McGuire who resided in the Seventeenth Ward at this time. Peter J. McGuire was probably born in the Seventeenth Ward, and he was, at any rate, “raised there.” It is highly unlikely that his birthplace building still exists or retains the ability to provide archaeological information that would prove nationally significant.

## Haines Piano Shop. New York City, NY

In 1869 at age 17 McGuire began an apprenticeship at the Haines Piano Shop, which was located at 330 to 342 Second Ave.<sup>3</sup> The building that housed the shop no longer exists. The site of the piano shop is now “Peter’s Field,” a park between 20th and 21st Streets and First and Second Ave. named for two other prominent Peters: Peter Stuyvesant and Peter Cooper.<sup>4</sup> It is possible that McGuire’s place of work may have been different Haines facility than the shop on Second Ave. In 1891, long after McGuire left New York, there was a Haines piano factory between 132 and 133 Streets and Alexander Street that included 21 lots, a lumber yards, and building. An advertisement for Haines said the company was established in 1851 by Napoleon J. Haines.<sup>5</sup> That piano factory building no longer exists at this address.<sup>6</sup>

## Tompkins Square Park, East Village, Manhattan, New York City, NY

Tompkins Square Park is a 10.5-acre public park in the Alphabet City portion of East Village, Manhattan, New York City. The park is bounded on the north by East 10th Street, on the east by Avenue B, on the south by East 7th Street, and on the west by Avenue A, is abutted by St. Marks Place to the west.

McGuire’s association with Tompkins Square Park is based on his leadership of the famous Tompkins Square rally of January 13, 1874. This rally and demonstration, involving thousands of workers, occupies an important place in the pages of American labor history because it ended when police crushed it causing a riot that marked an unprecedented era of labor conflict and violence. The riot occurred in the midst of the Panic of 1873, a depression that lasted for several years. Workers movements throughout the United States had been making demands of the government to help ease the strain of the depression. Organizations rejected offers of charity and instead asked for public works programs that would provide jobs for the masses of unemployed. When organizations of the unemployed sprang up in the many cities, McGuire spoke almost nightly on soap boxes in the vacant lots of his neighborhood, urging his fellow citizens to demand work or relief. His forceful and dynamic speaking style drew crowds and attention. His reputation was still limited to his ward until he was elected to the Committee of Safety, the umbrella organization that coordinated demonstrations for public



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   3  

---

relief in the winter of 1873-74. His role as a city-wide spokesman for the unemployed catapulted him out of obscurity and led the proper New York Times to brand him as a "disturber of the public peace." As part of a campaign to discredit the Committee of Safety, police officials arranged for his father, John McGuire, to issue a public denunciation of his notorious son's "radical and atheistic" behavior. McGuire continued his work, leading up to the famous Tompkins Square rally and a violent attack on the young labor movement.

Tompkins Park's association with McGuire is limited to one demonstration and riot induced by police brutality. It has an equal or greater association with other demonstrations and noteworthy historical figures. In 1857, immigrants protesting unemployment and food shortages were attacked by police in the park. In 1863 the deadly Civil War Draft Riots occurred in the park.<sup>7</sup> In 1877, three years after the McGuire-led march, 5,000 people fought with the National Guard when they amassed to hear Communist revolutionary speeches at the park.<sup>8</sup>

The park is named for Daniel D. Tompkins (1774–1825), Vice President of the United States under President James Monroe and the Governor of New York from 1807 until 1817. The park also contains three historical monuments. There is a monument in the north side of the park to the General Slocum boating disaster on June 15, 1904. This was the greatest single loss of life in New York City prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks. Over a thousand people, mainly German immigrant mothers and children, drowned in the East River that day. The park is also the place where Indian Sadhu A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada came to sing and preach in 1966, beginning the worldwide Hare Krishna movement. An elm tree in the park's southern plaza that he chanted beneath is now considered sacred to the Hare Krishna faith. The southeast corner of the park contains a statue of Samuel S. Cox (1824–1889), a New York City politician who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from Ohio and New York, and as U.S. Minister to the Ottoman Empire in 1885–1886.

The layout of the park was changed by Robert Moses in 1936 and was designed to divide and manage crowds that have gathered there in protest since the 1870s. That tradition was rekindled as the park became the locus of demonstrations against the Vietnam War in the 1960s. By the 1980s Tompkins Square Park had become synonymous with New York's increased social problems; it was a high-crime area that contained encampments of homeless people and was a center for illegal drug dealing and heroin use. In August 1988, a riot erupted in the park and thirty-eight people were injured when police attempted to clear homeless people from the park. Like the McGuire led demonstration one hundred years before, bystanders and political activists got caught up in the police action after a large number of police surrounded the park and charged at the hemmed-in crowd. The park had become a symbol of the problems in the city, including homelessness—which had prompted the 1988 riot.

In addition to the Robert Moses redesign, increasing gentrification in the area during the 1990s and 2000s, enforcement of a park curfew, and the eviction of homeless people have changed the character of Tompkins Square Park. The park was refurbished in 1991, reopening in 1992 with playgrounds and basketball courts, dog run, ping pong table, handball courts, and built-in outdoor chess tables.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   4  

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## **Pease Piano Company, New York, NY**

On August 2, 1874 McGuire went to work for the Pease Piano Company and “finished his trade.” Pease factory and warerooms were located at 316-322 W. 43 St, New York, NY. The piano company building no longer exists at this site, which is now occupied by the Ford Foundation Building.<sup>9</sup> During the Great Depression, Pease was purchased by the large Winter Piano Company which produced the Pease brand name until 1950. McGuire did not work long at Pease. McGuire moved to New Haven, Connecticut in September 1875 to organize the New Haven Branch of the Socialist Democrats and in December went on six-week tour making speeches on behalf of socialism. In February 1877 McGuire embarked on a five-week walking tour of New England giving speeches.

## **New Haven Folding Chair Company, New Haven, Connecticut**

In June 1877, McGuire went to work for the New Haven Folding Chair Company at 352 State Street for money to continue campaigning. The folding chair building no longer exists on the site which is currently occupied by a vacant retail building and former community center.<sup>10</sup>

## **Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, St. Louis, Missouri**

In October 1879 McGuire and his family relocated to St. Louis where he went to work in furniture factory. The Workingmen's Party had mobilized St. Louis workers during the great railroad strike of 1877, and McGuire imagined the city would be fertile ground for organizing. Representing the St. Louis Trades and Labor Assembly, he lobbied the Missouri State Legislature for bills on mine ventilation and child labor. His efforts also established the first bureau of labor statistics in the United States after he convinced the legislators to establish a State Bureau of Labor Statistics. He was subsequently appointed Deputy Commissioner. McGuire was not cut out for the life of a state appointed official. He grew impatient with the Bureau's limited authority. After some conflict with his supervisor heightened his dissatisfaction with watching labor struggles from a distance, McGuire quit after six months and returned to the trades to promote trade unionism and fight for the eight-hour day

In 1881 McGuire organized a Chicago convention to form a union. Representatives from 11 cities joined him, and over four spirited days, they produced a constitution and structure. On August 8, 1881, thirty-six carpenters from eleven cities met in a Chicago warehouse to form a national union, the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (renamed UBC&J in 1888). The Brotherhood unanimously elected McGuire as its first general secretary, the only full-time position in the union.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   5  

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McGuire started writing and publishing the union's periodical, *The Carpenter*, from his offices at 911 N. 19th St., St. Louis, Mo. The building containing these offices no longer exists and the site is currently occupied by a parking lot.<sup>11</sup>

## United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, New York, NY

In 1882 McGuire returned to New York City. His union was penniless. The March issue of *The Carpenter*, the official monthly, was printed thanks to a friend's \$30 loan. McGuire did not mind personal poverty, but he dreaded the collapse of the organization.

The March issue listed 184 William Street as the union's office and McGuire's address as a post office box: PO Box 3560 New York. The union's 1882 building no longer exists at 184 William Street. It is currently occupied by the Shaefer Trading Company, listed as a foreign business corporation in the State of New York.<sup>12</sup>

## Clarendon Hall, New York, NY

There is a consensus among historians that Clarendon Hill, located at 114 East 13th Street, New York, NY, was the site of McGuire's May 8, 1882 speech to the Central Labor Union in which he first suggested the designation of a holiday for labor. It was a hall used for meetings, performances and exhibitions. The former Clarendon Hall no longer exists. Instead, the site is now occupied by the American Felt Building erected 1909.<sup>13</sup>

## Union Square, New York, NY

Union Square is between E. 14<sup>th</sup> and E. 17<sup>th</sup> Streets and Union Square West and Union Square East in New York City. While Union Square held the reviewing stand for the first large scale parade including a wide representation of labor, the square is "not associated with a single significant person, but is "nationally significant for the role it has played in the history of labor in this country" including the first Labor Day Parade and parades for twelve subsequent years that culminated in passage of national legislation for Labor Day.<sup>1</sup>

Union Square and the Labor Day parade and festival of Sept 5, 1882, are nationally significant for many events beyond McGuire's involvement. They represented a culmination of ten years of agitation for the eight-hour day, elimination of repressive tactics of employers, support for Irish peasants' struggles against absentee landlords, dealing with massive unemployment caused by the depression of 1873, and frustration of dealing with police violence that occurred at Tompkins Square Park in 1874.

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<sup>1</sup> See Union Square Nomination for National Landmark listing available at: <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/1b01b341-8fe0-48bc-853e-6d0fbfc48ea3>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   6  

---

Union Square is closely associated with other important labor leaders of the McGuire era, all of whom actively participated and occupied prominent positions speaking and on the reviewing stand. These include Robert Blissert, President of the NY Central Labor Union and Grand Marshall William McCabe, New York City local of the International Typographical Union.

Union Square was also associated with the leadership of the Knights of Labor, including Grand Master Workman Terence V. Powderly, who had scheduled the Knights' convention in New York City at the same time as the parade. Sixty-seven Knights of Labor delegates representing 42,517 members, shared the reviewing stand at Union Square with McGuire.<sup>14</sup> Union Square itself had nothing to do with the creation of Labor Day. As the NHP nomination states:

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 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. ... It was through demonstrations such as the grand parade of the Knight of Labor, through the Central Labor Union of NYC, 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.

Union Square Park contains many commemorative sculptures, including a bronze equestrian statue of George Washington that was dedicated in 1856 because the park was the location of a reception given Washington in 1783 in recognition of his leadership and on the occasion of the British evacuation from New York. A statue of Abraham Lincoln holding the Emancipation Proclamation was completed in 1870 in the southwest corner of the Square. A statue of the Marquis de Lafayette was dedicated in the park in 1876. A 36-foot diameter base Liberty Pole with the entire Declaration of Independence and a Thomas Jefferson quote was installed in the park to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

**Office and Home, Cleveland, Ohio**

In 1884 McGuire married Christina Wolff of Staten Island, NY. The couple moved to Cleveland, Ohio in the Fall of 1884. The McGuires lived and McGuire maintained the national headquarters of United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in Cleveland from 1884 through 1886. The McGuires' first child, Lillian Elizabeth McGuire, was born in Cleveland on March 3, 1886.

The Cleveland Directory for this time period lists a residence of Peter J. McGuire at 252 Hanover. Cleveland's entire north-south street grid was given new numbers and in some cases new street names in 1906. Hanover Street is now known as W. 28th Street. According to the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office, a street number of "252" on the old Hanover Street "was probably located south of Detroit Avenue and north of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   7  

---

Franklin Circle” on today’s W. 28<sup>th</sup> Street and “there are almost no residential scale buildings left in that area due to urban renewal era demos and a hospital located nearby that ate the area for parking.”<sup>15</sup>

None of the buildings remaining on W. 28<sup>th</sup> Street between Detroit Avenue and Franklin Circle would have been the McGuire residence between 1884 and 1886:

1422 W. 28<sup>th</sup> street is a brick commercial building occupied by the Shafer Printing Company with entrance on Detroit Avenue.

1536 W. 28<sup>th</sup> was built in 1920.<sup>16</sup>

1538 W. 28<sup>th</sup> was also built 1920.<sup>17</sup>

1527 W. 28<sup>th</sup> was built in 1900.<sup>18</sup>

1535 W. 28<sup>th</sup> was also built in 1900.<sup>19</sup>

While the 1884 issues of *The Carpenter* published in Cleveland listed only “Lock Box 180 Cleveland, OH” as the office address, subsequent issues gave No. 19 Frankfort St., Cleveland as the newsletter’s address and, presumably, the address of McGuire’s office.<sup>20</sup> Frankfort Street became Frankfort Avenue after 1906 and No. 19 would have fallen between No.s 642 and 720 in the new numbering system of Frankfort Avenue.<sup>21</sup> All of the possible corresponding addresses for the old No. 19 address on Frankfort Street on today’s renumbered Frankfort Avenue are part of the ABM parking lot.<sup>22</sup>

**Office and Homes, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

McGuire established a work office as the General Secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (UBC&J) in Philadelphia at 124 N 9<sup>th</sup> Street from 1890 until he resigned in 1901.<sup>23</sup> The building standing at this address today built circa 1930 has lost its ability to interpret McGuire’s times and headquarters activities for the UBC&J.<sup>24</sup> It is a three-story, brick-fronted, commercial building featuring a blue awning of a Nationwide agency, Gannon Insurance Associates, Inc.<sup>25</sup> It also has offices of the Oriental Treatment Center – Acupuncture and Skytech International Electricians.

McGuire resided at three different locations in Philadelphia.<sup>26</sup> He first lived at 529 McClellan Street in 1890 and moved shortly after to 906 Cherry Street. Tax data for the 529 McClellan Sreett address gives a construction date of circa 1920, thirty years after McGuire had moved out.<sup>27</sup> However, while a visual examination of Google Street View indicates an older building, this fairly short term, likely rented domicile does not adequately represent McGuire’s contribution to American Labor History.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   8  

---

The building at 906 Cherry Street was built in 1930, forty years after McGuire resided there.<sup>28</sup>

In 1892 he moved his home to 336 Franklin Street. That residence was demolished to make way for the Vine Street Expressway and US Route 676.<sup>29</sup>

## Homes, Camden, New Jersey

From 1893 to 1902 McGuire and his family resided at 221 Vine Street, in the Cooper Point neighborhood of Camden.<sup>30</sup> The current single-family home located at 221 Vine Street was built in 1910, four years after McGuire's death.<sup>31</sup> While a visual inspection of Google Street View indicates that 221 Vine Street may indicate an older building, McGuire's family described their first house in Camden as "a three-story house with a bay window and pleasant garden."<sup>32</sup> While 221 Vine Street has three stories, there is not presently any sign of a bay window there or in any other house on the block. Interestingly, when McGuire's widow and daughters moved out of the Byron Street address in May 1907, they relocated to 331 Vine Street, Camden, one block east of 221 Vine Street. A Google Street View of this address shows reveals a two-story building with no bay window, but attached as a twin to another building that has two bay windows. At 324 Vine there is almost a "twin" to the 333 Vine house, with two bay windows and a third floor and a large fenced green open space with trees between the buildings.

From 1903 until 1905 McGuire resided at 916 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Camden.<sup>33</sup> The building at this address today, a single-family home, was built in 1889 before the McGuire's took up residency.<sup>34</sup> However, the building has been substantially modified since the McGuires lived there and lost architectural integrity as a single family home and its ability to interpret McGuire's life and times. It has been converted to a church: Iglesia Tesalonica, C.L.A., Pastores Jose y Maritiza.<sup>35</sup>

From 1904 to 1906 he resided at 204 Byron Street, Camden.<sup>36</sup> 204 Byron Street was destroyed by a large fire and was gone by 2004.<sup>37</sup> The site is now a vacant lot.<sup>38</sup>

## United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, General Headquarters Building, 222 East Michigan St, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners moved their headquarters from Philadelphia in 1909 to be more centrally located. On April 11, 1910, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners placed a bronze tablet in memory of their founder, P.J. McGuire, at the foot of their headquarters, the Carpenters' building. The tablet was a gift and a tribute from the Chicago District Council and affiliated unions. The General Executive Board being in session, all of its members and all general officers participated in the ceremonies following its placing in position.

General President Huber, accepting the tablet, said:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

APPENDIX   A   Page   9  

---

I congratulate the District Council of Chicago in presenting such a fine memorial to the memory of P.J. McGuire in the Brotherhood's own building. It is something that will be a credit to Chicago as well as to the Brotherhood in general. It will be there as long as the building stands and I hope an incentive to the younger element of the U.B., when they look upon it, to do what he tried to do in the interests of the carpenters.

I knew P.J. McGuire for many years no one in this Brotherhood thought more of him than your humble servant. While you as members of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America may not realize it, I knew Brother McGuire in his young manhood; I knew him in his prime; we worked side by side for some time in the interests of the Brotherhood. May his memory, may his actions, may his good deeds and his wholesome advice be a lesson to us to carry on this work in the future better than it has been in the past and make a lasting monument to his memory as the founder of the Brotherhood.

The administration has changed, but the present administration is doing the best it knows how to keep the organization on the boom, and with the presentation of this magnificent tablet I hope it will be the means of binding the Brotherhood of Carpenters closer together than we have been in the past and forge a chain of unions throughout and across this continent whose links will be unseverable whose forging will withstand the rust of time and the strain of adversity. It means much to me as an individual and it ought to mean more to the rank and file. The rank and file did not know "Old Pete" as I did, but let us take an example from his good deeds and do the best we can. When we have done that, we have fulfilled our duties.

The Carpenters Building, the former general headquarters of the United Brotherhood, is not a suitable site for interpreting the life of Peter J. McGuire. McGuire never set foot in the building as it was constructed after his death. After the United Brotherhood moved its headquarter again to Washington, D.C. in 1960 to reflect the growing importance of the union's influence in national politics, the building was used for other purposes and by May 2014 had been converted into the Salvation Army's Carpenters Apartment building.<sup>39</sup>

**Terre Haute, Indiana, Eugene Debs Home and Museum, McGuire Marker**

In 1990, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America erected the Peter J. McGuire Marker in Terre Haute Indiana in the backyard of the Eugene Debs Home and Museum.<sup>40</sup> The marker acknowledges McGuire's founding of the largest construction/industrial international union in North America, his help founding and leading the American Federation of Labor, his travels throughout the land fighting for workers rights and leading campaigns for protective laws, his establishment of the eight hour day, and is credited as "The Father of Labor Day."<sup>41</sup>

The Eugene V. Debs Home and Museum is not a suitable site for interpreting the life of Peter J. McGuire. McGuire's marker is but one of sixteen plaques on the memorial wall of the Virgil E. Morris Memorial Gardens adjacent to the Debs Museum honoring early labor leaders and prominent pioneers of the American labor

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   10  

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movement.<sup>42</sup> The Eugene V. Debs Museum, the former house of Eugene V. Debs and Katherine Metzel Debs, is now owned and operated by the Debs Foundation as a museum whose interior features many of Debs' possessions and other artifacts from his lifetime.<sup>43</sup>

DRAFT



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, NJ

APPENDIX   A   Page   11  

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## End Notes

- 1 II. National Register Criteria For Evaluation, Criteria Consideration categories, [https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15\\_2.htm](https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm)
- 2 Corotis, A. Charles and Charles W. Phillips, *The Life Story of a Forgotten Giant. P.J. McGuire Father of Labor Day, Memorial Committee of the Central Labor Union of Camden County and Vicinity, 1946.* p. 1
- 3 <http://antiquepianoshop.com/online-museum/haines-brothers/>
- 4 <https://goo.gl/maps/8nmtGwDJCoR2>  
<https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/peters-field>
- 5 <http://antiquepianoshop.com/online-museum/haines-brothers/>
- 6 See view at <https://goo.gl/maps/UWEGJMW95SF2>
- 7 Strausbaugh, John (September 14, 2007). "Paths of Resistance in the East Village". *The New York Times*. Retrieved August 25, 2008.
- 8 Same source.
- 9 <http://newyorkyimby.com/2015/12/12-story-ford-foundation-building-at-320-east-43rd-street-to-get-renovations-midtown-east.html>
- 10 <http://www.loopnet.com/Listing/17323780/352-State-Street-North-Haven-CT/>
- 11 See view of 911 N. 19th St today at: <https://goo.gl/maps/gdoc2LvY3MA2>
- 12 Current view of 184 William Street:<https://goo.gl/maps/tQgBTCgxLrp>
- 13 <https://www.cityrealty.com/nyc/east-village/american-felt-building-114-east-13th-street/8614>
- 14 Same source, P. 13
- 15 Lisa Adkins email to Andrea Tingey dated July 24, 2017.
- 16 <https://www.trulia.com/homes/Ohio/Cleveland/sold/20679841-1536-W-28th-St-2-Cleveland-OH-44113>
- 17 [https://www.zillow.com/homes/1538-W-28th-St.-num.-1.-Cleveland,-OH-44113\\_rb/](https://www.zillow.com/homes/1538-W-28th-St.-num.-1.-Cleveland,-OH-44113_rb/)
- 18 [https://www.zillow.com/homes/1527-w.-28th-cleveland\\_rb/](https://www.zillow.com/homes/1527-w.-28th-cleveland_rb/)
- 19 [https://www.zillow.com/homes/1535-W-28th-St.-Cleveland,-OH-44113\\_rb/](https://www.zillow.com/homes/1535-W-28th-St.-Cleveland,-OH-44113_rb/)
- 20 In January 1886: *The Carpenter* published at No. 19 Frankfort St., Cleveland.  
<http://digital.lib.umd.edu/image?pid=umd:674042#fullMetadata>
- 21 [Note Frankfort St. became Frankfort Ave.] p. 252  
<http://cplorg.cdmhost.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p128201coll0/id/942/show/387>. Note that in the address conversion guide, no Number 19 is specifically listed. Number 18 is listed and it became number 707. Number 22 became 703, and 21 became 642. The remaining new addresses include Numbers 708, 718, 720, and 722, which corresponded to old Number 11. .
- 22 <https://goo.gl/maps/UwYdbeMst3A2>
- 23 Philadelphia City Directory for each year cites. March 28 Samuel Gompers letter to Mr. P.J. McGuire, Sec. UBC&JofA, 124 N. 9th St. PhiladeLphia, PA.
- 24 Based on year of construction of adjacent property: <https://www.redfin.com/PA/Philadelphia/126-N-9th-St-19107/home/40555946>
- 25 <https://www.google.com/maps/place/124+N+9th+St,+Philadelphia,+PA+19107/@39.9541232,-75.15455,3a,75y,288.92h,90t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s4mLWEW4Gix6D97922uwksQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656!4m5!3m4!1s0x89c6c62a0bad10e1:0x5f0cc6f2ee82bbe6!8m2!3d39.9541359!4d-75.1546972>
- 26 Residence addresses from relevant years of the Philadelphia City Directory.
- 27 [https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/529-McClellan-St-Philadelphia-PA-19148/10172612\\_zpid/](https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/529-McClellan-St-Philadelphia-PA-19148/10172612_zpid/)
- 28 [https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/906-Cherry-St-Philadelphia-PA-19107/10197669\\_zpid/](https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/906-Cherry-St-Philadelphia-PA-19107/10197669_zpid/)
- 29 <https://www.google.com/maps/place/336+N+Franklin+St,+Philadelphia,+PA+19106/@39.957674,-75.1512099,18.62z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x89c6c88085baa265:0x5c09fc6d221f9537!8m2!3d39.9570986!4d-75.1511153>
- 30 Camden City Directory for relevant years.
- 31 [https://www.trulia.com/homes/New\\_Jersey/Camden/sold/20380758-221-Vine-St-Camden-NJ-08102](https://www.trulia.com/homes/New_Jersey/Camden/sold/20380758-221-Vine-St-Camden-NJ-08102)
- 32 Pinkowski, Edward, *Forgotten Fathers*, 230

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite**  
**Camden County, NJ**

APPENDIX   A   Page   12  

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33 Camden City Directories for relevant years.

34 [https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/916-N-5th-St-Camden-NJ-08102/64753428\\_zpid/](https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/916-N-5th-St-Camden-NJ-08102/64753428_zpid/)

35

<https://www.google.com/maps/@39.954333,75.1180953,3a,74.2y,208.27h,94.29t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s3tzhDHam4Av0vaRuleNicQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656>

36 "P. J. McGuire Buried," Camden Post Telegram, Feb 21, 1906, p. 9.

37 <http://www.dvrbs.com/camden-streets/CamdenNJ-Streets-ByronStreet.htm>.

38 [https://www.google.com/maps/@39.9560695,-75.121694,3a,75y,199.25h,79.97t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sObBWRElyr\\_6GijSOjcs-og!2e0!7i13312!8i6656?hl=en](https://www.google.com/maps/@39.9560695,-75.121694,3a,75y,199.25h,79.97t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sObBWRElyr_6GijSOjcs-og!2e0!7i13312!8i6656?hl=en)

39 See <https://www.apartments.com/carpenter-apartments-indianapolis-in/ecf5gem/>

40 <http://www.hmdb.org/PhotoFullSize.asp?PhotoID=215795>

41 [http://www.historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HM13P5\\_peter-j-mcguire\\_Terre-Haute-IN.html](http://www.historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HM13P5_peter-j-mcguire_Terre-Haute-IN.html)

42 <http://debsfoundation.org/index.php/landing/visit-the-museum/virtual-tour/virgil-morris-memorial-gardens/>

43 <http://debsfoundation.org/index.php/landing/visit-the-museum/>

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 1



Peter J. McGuire Grave and Headstone  
Memorial in Background  
Peter J. McGuire Labor Day Memorial Service  
September 1, 2017



Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 2



Arlington Cemetery  
McGuire Marker  
Adjacent to Entrance and Office  
2017



Peter J. McGuire Gravesite  
Headstone  
“FOUNDER OF U.B.C. & J. OF A  
ALSO FATHER OF LABOR DAY”.  
McGuire, Wife Christina, and son Peter J. McGuire, Jr.  
2017



Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 4



Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone  
Base  
2017



Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone  
Second Stage  
"McGuire"  
UBC shield  
2017



Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 6



Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone  
Greek Cross Top  
2017





Peter J. McGuire Gravesite Headstone  
East Face  
McGuire Daughters and Son-in-Law  
2017

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 8**



**Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Statue and Colonnade  
2017**

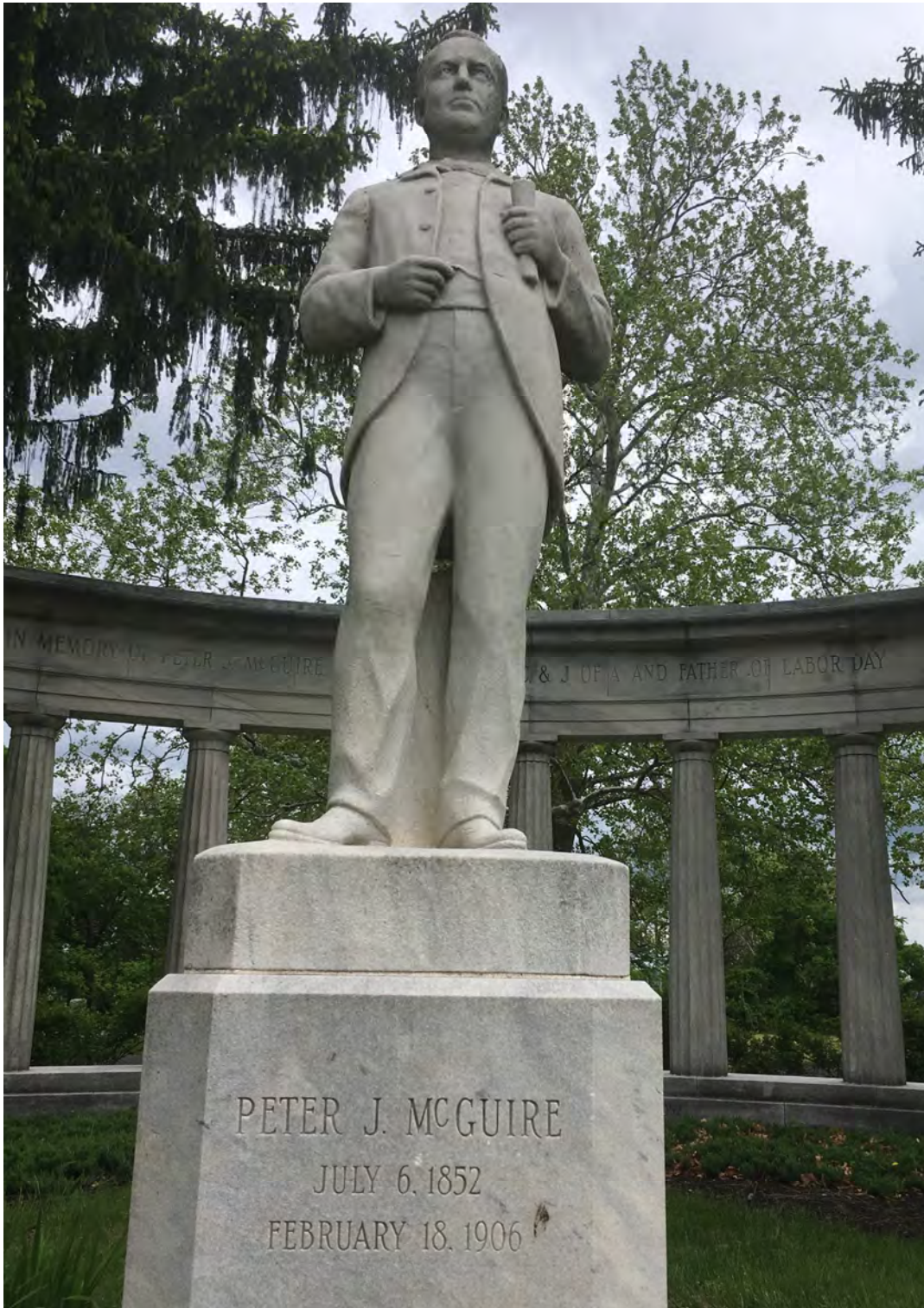


**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 9**



**Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Statue and Colonnade  
2017**

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 10**



**Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Statue  
2017**





Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Statue Detail  
2017

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 12



Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Colonnade  
2017



**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 13**



**Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Colonnade Base Detail  
“ERECTED BY UNITED BROTHERHOOD  
OF  
CARPENTERS AND JOINERS OF AMERICA 1952”  
2017**

Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 14



Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Colonnade  
End Column Top Half Detail  
2017





Peter J. McGuire Memorial  
Colonnade End Column Detail  
*Labor Omnia Vincit*  
(*Labor Conquers All*)  
2017

**Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Gravesite  
Camden County, New Jersey  
Current Photo 16**



**Candidate Philip D. Murphy  
Now 56<sup>th</sup> Governor of New Jersey  
And  
Donald J. Norcross, U.S. Representative  
New Jersey's First Congressional District  
At  
123<sup>rd</sup> Annual Peter J. McGuire Labor Day Observance  
Wreath Laying Ceremony at Arlington Cemetery  
September 1, 2017**