Why do we vote on Tuesdays? Blame the farmers
By Sophia Bairaktaris
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Why is Election Day on a Tuesday?

The short answer: Because the typical American back in the day worked as a farmer, and Tuesday was the most convenient day.

In the mid-19th Century, many lived outside of town and traveled in horse-drawn buggies. Voting on Sunday wasn’t a possibility for religious reasons, and it often took longer than a day to get to the polls, so Monday was out, too.

“By process of elimination in 1845, was the most convenient day to vote,” said Jacob Soboroff, executive director of Why Tuesday?, a non-profit, non-partisan organization that supports legislation to make voting more convenient. “Now in 2012 it is probably the most inconvenient day.

Voters now face many obstacles on Tuesday, including conflicting work and school schedules and parental responsibilities, said Alan Gitelson, professor of political science at Loyola University Chicago. Americans live in an urban industrial society that rearranged time to make the weekend more preferable.

“Empirical evidence states that if you provide more than one day you’ll have a higher turn out,” he said.

U.S. Congressmen Steve Israel, D-NY, and John Larson, D-Conn., introduced the Weekend Voting Act earlier this month to move election dates from the traditional Tuesday to the more convenient weekend. Why Tuesday? supports the legislation, Soboroff said.

“Voter turnout is terrible,” he said. “It has been for 50 years. We want to make sure voting is not an obstacle course that one has to conquer.”