

BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

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Wild turkey

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BY C.W. LATTIN

Our photo seen here was taken on Aug. 25, 1977, at the state's Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area when the first wild turkeys were released here in Orleans County.

Shown with these birds are William Rebovich, Dana Robinson and Oliver Meddaugh from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

This was the first trap and transfer of these birds to our area.

These species of birds disappeared from New York State in the mid-1800s when so much land was cleared removing the natural habitat of turkeys.

By the 1920s and 1930s much of the cleared land in the Southern Tier was abandoned because it was almost impossible to farm. As a result, turkeys started to again inhabit New York coming here from Pennsylvania.

White tail deer and fox also claimed their former habitat

of the Southern Tier.

The turkeys in our photo include a pair of toms and a hen. In September of the same year a pair of adult hens were released plus four juvenile hens, a tom and three young toms. In October, four more hens and a tom were released. All the birds released had been trapped in Steuben County.

From this beginning back in the late seventies, we can now occasionally see the results as these birds appear in local fields.

Sportsmen of Orleans County can take pride in the fact that turkeys through the help of their human friends have been able to rejuvenate their existence here.