

Bethinking of Old Orleans 9-24-81

C.W.Lattin • County Historian

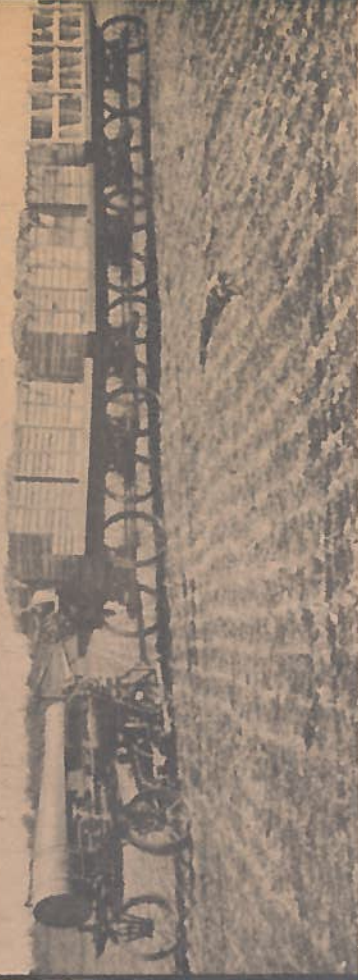


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This week I would like to mention two up-coming events relating to the historical background and development of Orleans County.

1st - A UNIVERSALIST REUNION And Heritage Day No. 38 A
On Sunday, Sept. 27 a reunion for Universalists will be held at the Cobblestone Church in Childs to which the public is invited. At 11:00 A.M. an Olde Tyme service will be led by Rev. Richard Hood, Minister of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church in Albion. His sermon entitled "Give Them Not Hell But Hope and Courage" is based on the theology of Rev. John Murray 1741-1815, preacher of universal salvation and father of Universalism in America. The 1824 Cobblestone Church at Childs is the oldest Universalist Church ediface in Orleans County. At one time there were Universalist Societies in Clarendon, 1834-1959, Ridgeway 1833-1961, Kendall 1852-1874 and Medina circa 1915. The Pullman Church is the only one which remains active in Orleans County today. In 1860 Universalists were the sixth largest denomination in the U.S. and out-numbered Roman

Universalist churches in N.Y. State. In 1961 Universalists merged with Unitarians into the Unitarian-Universalist Association. Currently operating in that structure there are less than twenty churches left with a Universalist Heritage in N.Y.S. All Universalists, former Universalists and descendants of Universalists from any of the now active Universalist churches in Orleans County are encouraged to attend the Reunion. Check your family background. You might be surprised. Following the morning program this Heritage Day will continue with events on the museum grounds including croquet matches, an auction and forging at the museum blacksmith shop. Shown center in the photo is George Pullman 1831-1897, benefactor of the Pullman Church 1894, surrounded by his mother, two sisters and brothers, two of whom were Universalist ministers.



2nd - FROM MARSH LAND TO MUCK LAND No. 38B

The second event taking place in the near future relating to Orleans County's heritage and development will be at the Barre Grange on Saturday, Oct. 3 at 8 P.M. Mrs. Patricia Burr of Elba will present her slide-tape show "From Marsh Land to Muck Land" for public viewing. Mrs. Burr, an artist and retired art teacher from Elba High School has thoroughly researched the history of the muck farming lands found half way between Albion and Batavia. This is a most informative presentation and should not be missed by anyone interested in farming or local history. Beginning around 1913, 11,000 acres of swamp lands were drained to provide black muck soil for cultivation. Up to this time the Oak Orchard Swamp had lain idle and unproductive. Until drainage and reclamation were vigorously pursued with gratifying results by the Western New York Farms Company. By 1915 almost twenty-one miles of main canal for drainage had been constructed while the feeder or lateral lines amounted to twenty miles. This construction successfully accomplished, released several thousand acres of previously submerged muck land. Adirondack woodsmen were then obtained for their skillful use of axes in cleaning underbrush. Larger trees were felled and the resulting timber used for making barrel staves and heads. Cultivation was first done by a caterpillar type of tractor engine. The season of 1915 produced the following crops: hay, wheat, corn, rye, oats, buckwheat, potatoes, kidney beans, white beans, string and wax beans, peas, lettuce, celery, onions, beets, carrots and spinach. Shown here is the "Steel Mule" hauling spinach grown on the Oak Orchard muck lands probably destined to the Elba Foods Products Company.