

Men harvest crop from the muck in 1930s

By Bill Lattin, Orleans County Historian



In this panoramic view we see the mucklands off Route 98 north of Elba and in the southern part of Orleans County.

Here in the early 1930s are men harvesting lettuce and putting it into crates. Horse-drawn wagons stacked with the crop are shown hauling it out of the muckland. Windbreaks of willow hedges were used to subdivide the great spaces down into smaller fields to help stop wind erosion.

Along with lettuce, the muck also produced carrots, potatoes, celery and of course the famous onions.

The fertile land was first drained from the Tonawanda Swamp beginning in 1909. The various farmers who owned and operated these lands were known as muckers.