

Draining the Bootheel



Cypress trees cut to make room for canals that would drain the bootheel swamps, 1915.
Missouri State Archives

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County governments worked with the state legislature to form the Little River Drainage District in 1907. Seven years later, construction began on five main ditches to drain water from the swampy bootheel to Big Lake in Arkansas. It took many years to clear the land for farming. Transforming the swamp was a huge job. Men with axes and steam-powered shovels cut down trees and drained the dense swamp. The water district covered nearly 500,000 acres and eventually made 1.2 million acres of land suitable for growing crops such as cotton.

ANALYZING PHOTOGRAPHS & PRINTS

OBSERVE

Study the picture closely. Describe what you see. _____

What details can you identify? Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities.

People	Objects	Activities

REFLECT

What clues are there as to the date of this photo/print? _____

Who or what do you think is the subject of this photo/print? _____

Why do you think this photo/print was created? _____

Where might you expect to find this photo/print? _____

Based on what you have observed list 3 things you might learn from the image.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

QUESTION

What questions does this photo/print raise? _____

Where could you find answers to them? _____
