

# Harvest In South Georgia

In 1998, the rich muck farms along Lake Apopka (central Florida) closed due to a State of Florida buy-out and environmental clean-up which drained the lake. 2,500 farmworkers lost their jobs. This exhibit describes the life and work of those farmworkers. Their story is also a larger story about migrant and seasonal farmworkers throughout the Southeast whose labors continue to put food on our tables and whose culture is **changing the face of the region.**

In 1999, Zellwin Farms, which had recently closed its large muck farm near Apopka, Florida, opened a \$2 million vegetable packing house east of Lake Park, Georgia. In July 2001, Coggins Farms and Produce of Lake Park bought the facility. Like **most farms in South Georgia, Coggins is staffed by migrant labor from Mexico and Central America.** Most workers migrate for economic reasons, taking **jobs that no one else wants.**

*"If we didn't have migrant workers we wouldn't be in this business. Mexicans first question is 'How much can we work?' Locals ask, 'What time do we go home?'"*

*Anthony Coggins, farmer, Echols County*

## HISPANIC POPULATION BY COUNTY, 2000

Echols	20%
Lowndes	3%
Colquitt	11%



Worker packs peppers at Coggins, Echols County.

*Photo by Laurie Kay Sommers, 2002.*



A crew from southern Mexico picks cucumbers at the David Corbett farm, Echols County.

*Photo by Laurie Kay Sommers, 2002.*