

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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A DOODLEBUG



The younger generation might ask, "What's a doodlebug?" Well, you're looking at one in this picture. I'm old enough to remember a few but the younger generation of today has no idea of such a vehicle as a doodlebug, at least, not in name.

The photo shown here was taken around 1925 by Fred Holt at the A.J. Ferris gasoline station located on West Avenue and West Academy Streets in Albion. The little building in the distance was the lumber yard office of Kirk Cole. And yes, prominently situated in the center foreground is a doodlebug. My own recollection of doodlebugs was 1930's autos made over into doodlebugs in the late 1940's and early 1950's. However, the doodlebug we see here must have been one of the first. I judge it was an early 'teens four-door Model-T with convertible top. When it became outmoded somebody transformed it into a kind of

bang-around pick-up or land rover. We see here that the wheels have been "souped up" to look like racing car wheels, and that the back seat, top and rear and body have been removed and replaced with a deck surrounded with iron pipe as a carry-all space. Note too, the running board has been removed and that there are no fenders. No doubt, such innovative vehicles as this in the 1920's, bespoke the sporty 4 x 4's and jeeps of today. No wonder they referred to this era as the roaring 20's, especially doodlebugs, and roar they did!

What's the point to this? The point is there is really nothing new. The younger set of by-gone eras liked the sporty vehicle as much as the younger set of today. The only difference is that now we usually buy them this way to begin with, rather than taking an older car and transforming it into a doodlebug.