

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XVII

7-15-95

No. 29

CIRCA 60 YEARS AGO



Our photo here has been graciously contributed to the Orleans County Department of History by Mrs. Katherine Dragon of East Avenue, Albion. My thanks also to George Callard and Tom Driesel for information and identification.

The picture, probably taken around 1935, shows the Coffey Bros. gasoline station which was located at the corner of West Bank and Liberty streets in Albion. John Coffey is standing directly behind the tank truck and Francis Coffey is standing behind the gas pumps under the canopy.

The Coffey Bros. including John, Francis and Edward "Ted" bought the gas station in 1931 from Alvin Washburn. They dealt in all kinds of Gulf petroleum products, and were among the first dealers to deliver fuel oil for furnaces when people first started giving up coal-fired furnaces. They sold gasoline in bulk to other gas stations and also kerosene. It is believed that the truck shown here is a Ford which they purchased new in 1932 or 1933. The car in the background is possibly a 1928 or 1929 Model A Ford.

Before going into business with his brothers, Francis Coffey sold Dunlop Tires out of a store on East Bank Street. However, he switched brands as we note in the picture, advertising Goodrich tires. Note too, the rack of tires behind John Coffey. The gas pumps are the old Rotary Dial type with electric light globes advertising Gulf on top of

each one. After this picture was taken a second story office was added to the east end of the building.

For over four decades the Coffey Bros. name was synonymous with petroleum products in the central Orleans County area. John however, died at the age of forty-seven in the 1940's and the other brothers carried on until the mid-1970's when they sold out their fuel oil business to Parsons and their bulk gasoline distribution to Halsted in 1977. The gasoline service station as we see it here was phased out in the 1960's.

In 1969 Arnold DeCarlo purchased the property and it has since been used as Arnold Auto Parts.

Update On the Boxwood Cemetery Tour which was held June 3. My sincere thanks to Ed Grinnell, Assistant Historian for the Village of Medina, and Dick Nellist, Historian for the Town of Ridgeway and Tim Cooper of the Cooper Funeral Home in Medina, for their help in making this tour possible. The winner of the \$10 prize for finding the special symbol was John Smith of Eagle Harbor Road, Albion. The designated symbol was an illustration of a broken column found on the Elsom monument. Around sixty people attended the tour which was rushed to completion to avoid rain. A guided walking tour to Mt. Albion will be held on Oct. 14, 1995.