

Rethinking of Old Orleans

Vol XXI

C.W. Lattin County Historian

11-19-99 No.46

ALBION ADVERTISER 70 YEARS OLD

The first issue, Vol. 1, No. 1 of the Albion Advertiser appeared on November 8, 1929. It has been with us every week since. Through its life the Advertiser has reflected many changes in our community. As the name implies, the early issues were primarily advertising with small articles tucked in. The first issue consisted of eight pages. But as the paper grew and developed, it became a much more sophisticated publication. The publisher was Peter A. Dragon and the editor was Jennie A. King.

The photo seen here by Fred Holt shows Peter Dragon's car decorated for a parade. The picture was taken in front of the Dragon residence on East Avenue in Albion sometime in the early 1930's. We are facing west looking up East Avenue and can see the smokestack of the canning factory in the distance. On the side of the sedan is the obvious banner stating: "Albion Advertiser, Orleans County's Finest and Best News Paper." On the roof top is anchored a large sign stating: "1st in News Pictures Circulation Display Ads Classified Ads."

Hanging off the front bumper is a cut out of a "candlestick" phone with the sign "One". In other words phone 1. Yes, the telephone number was simply 1. I checked the 1949-50 telephone directory and the Albion Advertiser phone number was still 1. That's all back in the days before all these new-fangled buttons you have to push today. For sure, this is a rare photo expressing "Pete" Dragon's exuberance for his paper.

Mr. Dragon was born in Fernie, British Columbia, Canada in January 1903. He started in the newspaper profession as a manager of the Orleans Republican which later merged with the Orleans American. In 1929 came the Albion Advertiser and in 1970 he purchased the Republican-American. He made an extra effort to use photographs in the Advertiser which his competitors were not so accustomed to do in such quantity years ago.

His editor, Jennie A. King, was a fixture at their Platt Street office and print shop which was built for that purpose. Jennie King also had worked for the Orleans Republican Newspaper. She and Mr.



Dragon made a very good team. Miss King, born in 1870, started in journalism in 1891. She worked and lived at the Advertiser office until her death in 1958. Mr. Dragon died in 1989 and left his chosen community a legacy in journalism and a chronicle of events which have become our history. For sure, the 70th anniversary of the Albion Advertiser is a milestone for this weekly publication.