

BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ALBION BEVERAGES

BY AL CAPURSO

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Editor's note: The following article, written by Al Capurso, is a first hand account of a one-time Albion business. Such a written remembrance of this type is a valuable and worthwhile piece of local history now preserved in published form. Kudos to Al and anyone else that has a story of this type and makes the effort to write it down for posterity.

— C.W. Lattin

It might come as a surprise to some, but Albion had its own soft drink bottling company, Albion Beverages was owned and operated by Thomas Sanfilippo at 128 Washington St., Albion; circa 1940 to 1960.

As you can see in the above photos, the bottles used by Mr. Sanfilippo carry a uniquely designed baked on label and logo. The label assured the consumer of the product's "Quality and Purity." It also carried the recommendation to "Serve Cold." If you wanted to call the company to place an order for soda pop, you merely had to look at the label and see their phone number was "2-5-0."

Thomas Sanfilippo was a hard-working, cheerful man who took delight in inviting us children to watch his fascinating operation at work. He used an automated conveyer equipped with high pressure spray jets that washed the bottles (see side down). The

with just the right amount of flavored syrup and carbonated water, and then capped. A worker stood at the end of the line picking up the finished bottles (four at a time) placing them into wooden cases for shipment. Grocery stores from Albion to Kuckville and Fancher and restaurants from Albion to Lakeside were supplied by Albion Beverages.

As a youth growing up across the street from the operation, I was lucky enough to often sample the various flavors of soda pop they produced. Our Sunday meals, family reunions and backyard picnics always saw plenty of Albion Beverages soda pop on hand.

My favorite was grape. They also produced cherry, ginger ale, cream soda, root beer and lemon lime. Albion Beverages also supplied the pop, ice and a wooden sales booth for the Albion football games.

Thomas Sanfilippo was the grandfather of the present day owner of Albion's Family Hardware Store, Fred Miller (DBA: Miller's Albion Hardware, Incorporated). Fred has run the Family Hardware since Aug. 1, 1986 and continues to this day, serving as one of the important cornerstones of the downtown Albion business community. In this day of corporate-owned, mega-super-chain stores, it is good to see that family-owned businesses