83RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ABBEVILLE MERIDIONAL MARKED
WITH ISSUING OF XMAS EDITION

The Abbeville Meridional, the sixth
oldest newspaper in the State
of Louisiana and recognized as the
oldest continuous business in Vermi-
lon parish, this month celebrates its
83rd anniversary and again marks the
event with the issuing of its regular
annual Christmas edition which is
made possible by the cooperation of
the many firms, individuals, and or-
ganizations who contributed adver-
sisements.

Organized in 1854 by Judge Eugene
Isadore Guegnon, the Meridional has
been published continuously for the
past 83 years. The printing plant was
expanded from year to year until to-
day it is rated among the finest
plants in Southwest Louisiana. The
Meridional has a unique history in
that it has remained in one family
throughout its existence. Today it is
owned and managed by Floyd D. Ed-
wards, a son of the late Dr. and Mrs.
C. J. Edwards.

History Is Recalled

Recalling the history of Vermilion
parish, one will find that Abbeville
was the parish seat of Vermi-
lon in 1854 and that the parish of
Vermilion was created in 1844. The first
newspaper was the “Independent”
established by Father A. D. Mogret
who is credited with the founding of
Abbeville. Valcourt Zeaney was the
publisher of the “Independent.”

The “Independent” was sold to
Judge Guegnon who changed the
name of the paper to “Le Meridional”
which means “pertaining to the
south,” the first issue appearing in
December 1856. The paper was edited
by him until his death in 1862.
When his son, Eugene, a prominent
young lawyer, became editor and ow-
er, he made Eugene Isadore Addison,

a namesake and godchild of the
father, the publisher. When Eugene
Guegnon died in 1877, his widow sold
the paper to Mr. E. L. Addison. In
1896 he sold half interest to Dr. C.
J. Edwards who then became editor.
In 1901 at the death of Mr. Addison,
Dr. Edwards became the sole owner.

During the year 1905, Henry La-
fler and E. J. Hoffpaur joined the
office force of the Meridional. It
was at that time the name of “Le
Meridional” was changed to The
Abbeville Meridional. At the death
of Dr. Edwards, his son, Floyd, took
over the management of the plant.
In 1920 Mr. Hoffpaur became editor
and filled that position until 1944
when ill health forced him to give up
his work. Mr. Hoffpaur was succeed-
ed by Ralph R. Bienvenu of St.
Martinville who is the present news editor.

In 1936 at the death of his mother,
Floyd D. Edwards acquired the entire
ownership of the paper. The growth
of the Meridional since Mr. Edwards
has taken it over has been outstanding.
The plant today includes the latest
of the type setting machines, a
newspaper press, a fast cylinder job
press, a folding machine, an automatic
job printing press, and other Job
presses.

In addition the Meridional is equip-
ped with a ruling machine, a power
paper cutter, a stapling machine, a
power paper drill, equipment for die
cutting, electric saw, a mat maker,
a half page casting box, an embosso-
graph machine and other equipment
making up one of the most complete
printing plants in Southwest Louisi-
ania. The plant is protected against
fire with a sprinkler system. It uses
electricity and gas for the operation of
its equipment.