The Abbeville Meridional, sixth oldest weekly in the State of Louisiana and a pioneer among the newspapers of the nation, this week celebrates its 86th anniversary.

To mark the anniversary of the paper and to join in the spirit of the Yuletide Season, the Abbeville Meridional is this week issuing its regular Christmas Edition.

The advertisers appearing in this issue have made possible this edition and the Meridional takes this opportunity to thank all those who have cooperated.

Organized in 1856 by Judge Eugene Isadore Guégnon, the Abbeville Meridional has been published continuously for the past 86 years. The printing plant was expanded from year to year until today it is rated along with 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. Edwards, a son of the late Dr. and Mrs. C. J. Edwards.

Recalling the history of Vermilion parish, one will find that Abbeville was made the parish seat of Vermilion in 1848 and that the parish of Vermilion was created in 1844. The first newspaper was the "Independent" established by Father A. D. Megret who is credited with the founding of Abbeville. Vaelcourt Veazey 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 owner. He made Eugene Isadore Addison, a namesake and godchild of the father, the publisher. When Eugene Guégnon died in 1877, his widow sold the paper to Mr. E. I. Addison. In 1890 he sold half interest to Dr. C. J. Edwards who then became editor. In 1901 at the death of Mr. Addison, Dr. Edwards became sole owner.

During the year 1905, Henry Laffler and E. J. Hoffpaurer 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. Hoffpaurer became editor and filled that position until 1934 when ill health forced him to give up his work. Mr. Hoffpaurer was succeeded by Ralph R. Bienvenu of St. Martinville who is the present news editor.

In 1926 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 equipped 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 Louisiana. The plant is protected against fire with a sprinkler system. It uses electricity and gas for the operation of its equipment.