Abdalla’s—-a Family Affair--
Spirals Into Big-Time

Although Abdalla’s in Lafayette had its comparatively modest beginning in 1932, the history of Abdalla’s stores in Southwest Louisiana goes back some 40 years—a history of unique family enterprise.

In 1895, George Abdalla, general head of all the stores, founded the first store in Opelousas. The first establishment was small and carried only a limited amount of merchandise. Fifteen years later, the business had prospered to such an extent that the location was changed and a larger building sought. The enterprise continued to progress until today a large edifice bears the Abdalla name in Opelousas and carries full-fledged department store status.

Along with the success of the initial enterprise must be coupled the branches which have developed and are now a major part of the business. This now includes well-established merchandising stores in not only Lafayette and Opelousas, but also in New Iberia and Abbeville.

Started in the heart of the depression, the Lafayette branch, under the management of Edward Abdalla (“Ed” to his friends) nevertheless had a healthy and vigorous growth from its inception. In a short time, business had grown to such proportions that additional departments had to be installed, and the original ones enlarged. A ladies’ department was installed as a specialized unit within the same building.

Progress of the establishment moved rapidly with the growth of the city, and demands were soon made for a shoe department. Unable to find adequate quarters in the already-crowded store, a new building was located only a store’s length away from the first establishment and a complete line of shoes, hosiery and purses offered.

Swiftly expanding and desiring more space in which to expand the department of this one store, the owners decided that the remedy was to give the public separate men’s and women’s merchandise exclusively in their own stores. So in 1940, the present set-up was established.

At the time of their opening on Wednesday, September 25, 1940, the manager of the local units stated: “It is with great pride that we announce the formal opening of our new establishments in this city. We feel that Lafayette has grown to such an extent that it is no longer advisable for any store to attempt to serve the public in one crowded store. For this reason we have built three modern stores in which are housed men’s clothing, women’s clothing and also children’s and a large shoe store.

“We have made every effort to build structures in conformity with the rapid development of this city, and we hope that the public will appreciate our view when we declare that a city developing as rapidly as Lafayette is deserving of the best and we have made every effort to build in conformity with this growth.

“We also have made every effort to handle merchandise of a high quality and within the range of the general buying public. We have installed lines that we believe cover the entire range of the women’s and men’s clothing departments.

“We welcome suggestions from the public and cordially invite every person in Southwest Louisiana to visit our new stores in Lafayette.”