

KING STREET

294 1980 thru 1999 Abe Dumas & Sons Originating at the corner of Market and King (see 22 King) M. Dumas really became a clothing store in the 1930's. Abe and Joe Dumas, twin sons of Mendel Dumas ran the store together. "When my brother and I got into it, we were 16 or 17 years old, when working was a full time deal with us," said Abe. "We would go to school in the morning, right from school to the store, and we stayed there till nine or ten o'clock at night every night. Six days a week. And we loved it. My father was still running his business in Berkeley County and the store kept getting bigger and bigger. [When] Roosevelt came into his presidency in 1932, Charleston was in a huge depression and we were doing a thriving business. We were one of the few stores in the city of Charleston that put in a full line of outdoor clothing, hunting wear, and we hit a very sensitive cord. I mean everybody in Charleston aspired to be a duck hunter or a plantation owner. Anyway, when Roosevelt opened the civilian corps, conservation corps which was the three "C" [Civilian Conservation Corps] they put eligible people to work, in particular blacks- - - but we restarted, we developed the uniform business. And that was in 1934 and 1935. And then from 1935 on, even industry started picking up and we had a uniform business, one of the early uniform retailers in this part of the country. And when World War II hit we were one of the largest retail uniform companies in this part of the country and we had become a recognizable purveyor of clothing....you know, sportswear, nothing super fancy, but it became a lot. We had, as I recollect it, we always had a line of work wear that was indigenous to the needs of people who worked in this community. So that meant we had the black people and the stevedores and the white people who had outside jobs, that weren't, you know, professionals. We had a modest amount of the beginning of what we call sportswear. And we still had back-to-school things. That was a nice little business. And the store kept growing and we were the L.L. Bean of Charleston, we were the Banana Republic of Charleston. (From an interview with Abe Dumas published on the internet in Jewish Heritage Series)



Looking South on King Street from 310 King Street toward the bend. The Haverty Furniture Store sign at 294 King can be seen at left. This later became M. Dumas & Sons