



WHAT HAPPENED

Three Schwegmann brothers opened the first supermarket in the city on Aug. 23, 1946.

The first Schwegmann grocery store was opened in 1869 in the Bywater. At their store on the corner of Piety and Burgundy streets, the Schwegmanns introduced the concept of “self-serve” grocery shopping, with a 10 percent discount to shoppers who gathered their own groceries

The third generation of Schwegmann grocery owners, John G. Schwegmann, Anthony Schwegmann and Paul Schwegmann, took



The Schwegmann's second giant supermarket was on Airline Highway, at Labarre Road.



The Schwegmann family forever changed the practice of “makin’ groceries” in New Orleans.

grocery innovation further, opening the first modern “supermarket” on St. Claude Avenue in 1946.

They branched out to the suburbs, opening a store on Airline Highway about four years later and then a third store on Old Gentilly Road. That store, with 155,000 square feet, was at the time the largest grocery store in the world.

The Schwegmann stores were known for having a wide array of services and products in their giant superstores. Customers could buy appliances and records, grab a beer and an oyster loaf, as well as make groceries.



German immigrants, the Schwegmanns opened a corner store in the Bywater, shown here in 1895. John Schwegmann Sr. is second from the left.

By 1995, there were 18 Schwegmann stores in the metro area.

But the chain made a misstep in the 1990s when it acquired the National Food store chain. The Schwegmann's financially strapped chain was sold in 1997, and the stores were closed in 1999.

John G. Schwegmann also served as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives and a member of the Louisiana Public Service Commission. He mounted an unsuccessful campaign for governor in 1971. He also founded Schwegmann Bank & Trust Co., which was later purchased by Jefferson Guaranty Bank.



The Schwegmann's store on Old Gentilly Road was considered the largest in the world at the time.

