

# Oldfield Hardware Store

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Location: 440 Turnberry St. South, Brussels, Ontario  
Year built: 1910

IN 1948 MAX OLDFIELD, an Air Force wireless mechanic, purchased this elegant 1910 building and hardware business from William Gillespie. Gillespie ran the hardware business for many years, since about 1900. One feature of the store was the pot-bellied stove around which customers would gather for a visit. The marks from “the chopping of the wood” for the stove are all that now remain. The original Wilton and Gillespie storefront sign hangs in the store.



Note the decorative brickwork in red and white.

When Max Oldfield started in the hardware business in 1946, his store was in the old Royal Bank building across the road. He bought the first section of his present store, the red brick section, in 1948 from William Gillespie. He says he chose the hardware business because his work as a wireless mechanic spurred an interest in mechanics.

When Oldfield began, he had no more than \$5,000 in stock and only about 1,000 square feet of store space. In 1955, the front of the Gillespie section of the hardware store was renovated and a complete new storefront was installed. In 1964, Oldfield expanded the business and purchased the store next door from C&G Krauter Plumbing. The store grew again in 1979 with the purchase of the neighbouring

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building which had housed J&K Shoes and Jeans. At one time, travelling salesmen from one firm or another would visit the store. Orders for merchandise would be handled by them. When long-distance telephone service arrived, orders were made over the phone and could take anywhere from 20 to 25 minutes. Now, orders for merchandise are computerized.



Wilton & Gillespie were in the hardware business in the early 1900s

Over the years the product lines on offer changed as well as the means of doing business. From the basic hardware-store stock offered in the early days, the business grew to include modern electrical appliances. In 1964, the hardware line was expanded to include such things as televisions and radios. At this time, the store became part of the Pro Hardware

Group, and later Tru-Value. One advantage in belonging to such a group is to be a part of a buying group. About 90% of the goods are now purchased this way. Radio Shack was added in 1980. Today, computer equipment is for sale alongside the hardware basics that have been the mainstay of the business for years.



The original Oldfield Hardware Store

A natural addition for Mr. Oldfield to make was a television repair service. He was kept busy with television sales during the day and spent many evenings repairing them.

The base of the hardware business has always been the area's farmers and related businesses as well as local industry. The store also sells fishing and hunting licenses and has a locksmith business. A Sears catalogue outlet is yet another service offered.