

Sills Home Hardware

Location: 69 Main St. South, Seaforth, Ontario

Year built: 1869

THE SILLS FAMILY has a long history of work in the hardware business. Daniel Lloyd Sills had a Grain, Drug and Hardware Store in Brucefield, where George A. Sills was born in 1854. At the age of 16, Daniel came to Seaforth and soon began clerking for Johnson Brothers Hardware. He stayed with them for 20 years before starting a hardware business with William Murdie in the early 1890s. When Murdie moved to Listowel seven years later, *Geo. A. Sills & Sons* was formed. George continued as a member of the business until his death in 1943.



The interior of Geo. A. Sills & Sons Hardware c. 1910 when it was located at what is now 35 and 37 Main Street south. Pictured, from left, are Joe Sills.

Frank S. Sills entered the business in the late 1890s and was connected with the business for 66 years. Another son, Charles P. Sills, joined the business for seven years before leaving for university. He worked as postmaster in Seaforth from 1924-54 and also worked in the Seaforth Custom Office. A third son, Joe, worked a short time before becoming a professional hockey player. *Geo. A. Sills & Sons* had their store in the block immediately north of Cardno Block from the early 1890s until they bought their present store in 1921. They moved here in 1922.

The next Sills to enter the business in 1934 was Frank's eldest son, D'Orlean, better known as Der. He eventually worked in partnership with his brother, Frank C.J. Sills. All of Frank Jr.'s children worked in the store at one time or another. Jim, his son and the current owner, is the fourth generation in the hardware trade.

The store building where *Geo. A. Sills & Sons* moved in 1922 was built for Thomas Kidd in 1869. It is distinguished by the arched 2nd-storey, windows with decorative hoods made of moulded concrete, and by its near-original storefront. Inside, the ceiling is of patterned tin made in squares.

When Kidd first built the store, the north part was occupied by William Robertson & Co.'s "sign of the circular saw" hardware business. Kidd and James McMulkin had the south store.

William Pickard & Co. had both stores by 1900, offering his customer's a dress goods department, a gents' furnishings department and a millinery department.



Kidd's store block at the corner of Main and Market streets, occupied here in c.1900, by William Pickard who was in the dry goods business over 25 years.



The Dress Goods Department.

A small brick building was erected at the back of the store in 1872 for use as an implement wareroom. Later, it was used as a liquor store, a butcher shop, a private bank, a tailor's shop, and a laundry. *Geo. A. Sills Hardware* began using it as a storage space and it is now part of the Sills Home Hardware store.



The Millinery Department

Frank Sills was collector – he collected memorabilia about the history of the town of Seaforth. The collection was donated to the town, becoming part of the collections of the Seaforth & Area Museum. You can visit the museum at the Town Hall.
