A. Hattersley & Sons

Founded: 1856

Location: North side of Main Street, east of Harrison Street, Fort Wayne (1856–61);
208–212 East Main Street (1862–1955); 3939 Mobile Avenue (1955–)

In 1856 Alfred Hattersley, an English immigrant, purchased the plumbing and
gas-fitting firm of B. W. Oakley & Son on Columbia Street in Fort Wayne. Oakley &
Son had succeeded the firm of Barker & Oakley, which had been founded in 1855.
Hattersley moved the firm to the north side of Main Street, east of Harrison Street; in
1861–62 he moved to a new location on the south side of Main Street between Barr and
Clinton Streets. At first Hattersley used a foot lathe but later installed a steam engine in
his works, which included a brass foundry and machine shop. Hattersley did plumbing,
heating, and electrical work and installed terrazzo tile flooring. Plumbing seems to have
been a specialty. Alfred's son Byron, who was born in 1856 and went to work in his
father's shop after graduating from college, recalled that the early firm's business was
chiefly the installation of pumps in cisterns and wells. Only after the city built a
waterworks did the demand for indoor plumbing (including indoor bathtubs) lead to an
expansion of the business. By 1880 Hattersley had several employees and dealt
extensively with gas and water piping.

Alfred Hattersley's three sons—Willis, Byron, and Alfred—all joined the
business. Byron's sons Harry A. and Eugene H. succeeded to the business and managed
it until 1956. In 1955 the old office of A. Hattersley & Sons was razed and replaced with
a parking lot for the Anthony Wayne Bank. The company moved to a new building at
3939 Mobile Avenue in October. In November the firm was incorporated. The

following February younger members of the firm took over management from the Hattersleys. The firm continued as an electrical, plumbing, and heating contractor and, in addition, installed many air conditioning, ventilation, and fire protection systems. Harmon O. Hensley became manager of the firm in the late 1950s.