

William's Shoes

Founded: ca. 1912

Location: 815 S. Meridian St, Anderson; Huntington; Elwood; Wabash; Warsaw; 1805 E. Boulevard in Kokomo Town Center

William Lloyd Hart departed from his log cabin in Bath County, Kentucky at age sixteen. His destination was Indianapolis to find a job which would be better than farm life in the Kentucky hills. He found a job at Marrot Shoe Store on Washington Street. Later he worked at Stout's and then New York Department Store. While working at New York, he became acquainted with Crowder-Cooper wholesale shoe firm. They assisted him in opening a shoe store in Anderson, while also traveling with their line of shoes. He had gotten married, so the Hart family packed up and moved to Anderson. The first store opened at 815 S. Meridian St. in downtown Anderson, in October 1912. The business was called Hart Shoe Store. The firm expanded during the years of 1916 to 1932. Operating stores in Huntington, Elwood, Kokomo, Wabash, and other towns. The Roosevelt Depression years of 1932 to 1941 were most disastrous for the Hart Shoe Stores. The store was operated from their home for a while.

In 1937 the family moved to Winona Lake, Indiana and opened a store in Warsaw. In 1950 a new partnership was formed with son William L. Hart, Jr. and the name H & H Shoes was adopted for the company. The Anderson store was reopened in 1962 and also a store was opened in Wabash. William Lloyd Hart, founder, passed away in Feb. 1963 at age 72. In 1965 the company became a Sub S Corporation.

William L. Hart, Jr. became President of the firm in 1967, while also being a supervisor for Schiff Shoes. Resigning from Schiff Shoes in Feb. 1968, a new H & H Shoes was opened on May 15, 1968 in Kokomo, In.

In 1974 the Warsaw store was moved to a new location and was opened d/b/a Hart's Shoeland. In 1975, William David Hart graduated from Indiana University Bloomington and joined the business full time. The decision was made to move the Wabash Indiana store to Kokomo and open as a men's store which David Hart ran. A decision was made in 1980 to move this store to the west side of Kokomo and making it a family store. The company purchased land on Dixon Road to build their own free standing store. The construction of the building was started in 1984 and was open for business in September 1984. The H & H store downtown Kokomo was closed in 1985 and moved to join the location on Dixon Road. The Dixon Road location was forced to move in 2004 because of continued road construction on Dixon Road. The move was to their present location at 1805 E. Boulevard in Kokomo Town Center. William L. Hart, Jr. passed away in 2007.