



Joshua Wilton & Sons Hardware Store

82 Court Square

Joshua Wilton came to Harrisonburg from Canada in 1865 and helped fellow-Canadian Philo Bradley establish Bradley Foundry. In 1868 Wilton began a hardware business in Harrisonburg. In 1879 he bought a lot beside the Sibert Building on South Court Square from Mrs. M. Coffman for \$3,800. He opened an impressive, three-story building on the lot in January 1880. The Rockingham

Register described the store as, “This is now the best business house in town, and reflects credit upon Harrisonburg, as well as upon the enterprise and energy of Mr. Wilton. He intends filling his store with the largest stock of hardware ever brought to Harrisonburg . . .”

The first floor was used for the hardware business and the upper floors as a rooming house. The Wilton, Clarendon, and Helbert hotels were located there at various times. Sons Claude and Ernest C. Wilton became associated with their father in the business. Joshua Wilton died in 1928.

In 1962 the First National Bank purchased the Wilton building to remove and use the lot as space for parking and a drive-in bank location. This Court Square landmark was razed in 1963. At that time it housed an ABC store, Valley Music, and a Dexter washing machine dealer, with a reborn Clarendon Hotel upstairs.



—Dale MacAllister

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