



SUMMERS HARDWARE

Summers Hardware operated under different names in several locations as early as 1888 before moving to this building in 1911, and was reorganized as Summers Hardware in 1915. The company originally sold farm, construction, office, and mill supplies. The store even sold automobiles from 1911 to 1915. The horse collars and plows that Summers once stocked have been replaced with sophisticated industrial and commercial supplies, reflecting the transition in East Tennessee from an agrarian to an industrial economy.

An idealized view of Summers Hardware from a postcard, ca. 1911.



Eight men standing in front of Summers' store on Main Street in the mid-1890s.

After 1910 the company's location on the CC&O Railroad, which had links to both the ET&WNC and the Southern Railway, enabled it to efficiently receive goods from manufacturers and to ship them to its business customers from Kentucky to the Carolinas. Prior to paved highways, the company's mountain customers could best be reached by train. It was at that time one of three major regional hardware distributors in Johnson City and is the only one now in existence.