

## **Startup of A&P**

In the mid-19th Century, tea cost about a dollar a pound, making it an expensive staple. George Hartford and George Gilman came up with a simple but revolutionary plan to lower the price. They bought tea directly from the ships in New York Harbor. Then, taking a low-percentage profit, they tried to achieve high-volume sales.

Their tactics worked. They soon turned their mail-order business into a chain of stores called the Great Atlantic and Pacific – A&P.

From the outset, and even with a family of five children, Hartford generously gave thousands of dollars a year to charitable causes, ranging from the Pius X Mission in Skagway, Alaska, to the First Methodist Church in Urbana, Illinois. As his fortune increased, he established a foundation as a conduit for his giving. Hartford's desire was that his contributions benefit people such as those whose purchases at A&P stores had built his fortune.

Later, he reorganized the foundation to receive his estate, so that by the time he died, bequests to individuals totaled \$500,000, with \$55 million going to the foundation, including \$40 million in A&P stock.

Thus, a portion of every dollar spent at an A&P store would eventually be “donated.” In many respects, Hartford is still giving his fortune away.

A time-proven fact of life is that you can't take your money with you, but you can send it on ahead.

As Matthew 6:19-20 points out, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

--Beecher Hunter