

The Great ATLANTIC & PACIFIC Tea Company



FoodBasics

The Food Emporium

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[Home](#) » [Our Company](#) » [Our History](#)

Our History



1859-1899



1900-1959



1960-1999



2000-Present

More than 150 years ago, The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Inc. (A&P) began operations as The Great American Tea Company. Its first store – on Vesey Street in New York City – sold tea, coffee and spices at value prices. Soon after, stores sprung up all around the New York metropolitan area, and salesmen took their wares to the road in horse-drawn carriages bound for New England, the Midwest and the South.

In 1869, the Company was renamed The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, commemorating the first transcontinental railroad. In 1936, A&P became the first national supermarket chain in the United States, one of many innovative concepts that radically changed the way consumers shopped. Its vast advertising and promotional activities reached so many consumers that A&P became an American icon.

Below are select milestones from the Company's rich history:

1859-1899 - Becoming a Grocery Pioneer

- **1859** - The Great American Tea Company is founded as a mail order business by tea and spice merchants George Huntington Hartford and George Gilman. The same year, the first store-warehouse operation opens in New York City at 31 Vesey Street.
- **1869** - The Company is renamed the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, or A&P.
- **1880** - A&P begins marketing its own brand of baking powder, its first private label product. It also pioneers the use of refrigerated railroad cars to transport fruit, and becomes the first to bring fresh seafood to the Midwest.
- **1881** - A&P becomes the first grocery chain to operate 100 stores and expands to 5,000 delivery routes.
- **1880s** - With the public's taste for coffee growing rapidly, A&P establishes its own brand, Eight O' Clock Breakfast Coffee, packaged in a red bag. George Huntington Hartford names the product after the time of the day that he believed the most coffee was consumed.
- **1887** - Sales hit \$1 million.
- **1890s** - A&P introduces premium "checks" to be redeemed for cups, saucers and other goods, marking the first original customer-loyalty program with premiums and savings coupons.

1900-1959 - Becoming an Innovator and American Icon

- **1912** - John Hartford convinces his father and brother to launch the first 'no frills' grocery format in America with the opening of the A&P Economy Store in Jersey City, N.J. The cash and carry store, with plain furnishings and fixtures, offered no credit, no deliveries and no premiums - just quality groceries at very low prices.
- **1920** - The A&P Economy Store concept flourishes and catalyzes an extraordinary period of growth, resulting in 4,638 stores, from about 350 stores in 10 years prior.

- **1924** - The A&P Radio Hour launches as America's first national radio program. Soaring in popularity through the 1930s, it featured popular artists such as Kate Smith, Harry Horlick and the A&P Gypsies.
- **1929** - A&P more than triples its store count to 15,418 stores and increases sales five-fold to reach the \$1 billion mark.
- **1930s** - A&P expands to California, Washington and Canada.
- **1933** - A&P participates in the World's Fair in Chicago. Housed in a 2,000-seat amphitheater, the A&P Carnival draws thousands of visitors with the A&P Marionette Revue, Harry Horlick and other entertainment.
- **1936** - A&P opens the nation's first "supermarket," a 28,125-square-foot store in Braddock, Pa., that enables customers to select their own groceries without the assistance of a clerk.
- **1937** - A&P launches Woman's Day magazine through a wholly-owned subsidiary, The Stores Publishing Company. The magazine features articles on food preparation, home decoration, needlework and childcare, selling for two cents a copy exclusively in A&P stores.
- **1941** - Eight O' Clock coffee becomes the best-selling brand of coffee in the world.
- **1958** - Sales grow to \$5 billion and 4,252 stores. A&P tops the industry, with volume exceeding that of its closest competitor by more than \$1 billion.
- **1959** - A&P celebrates its 100th anniversary.

1960-1999 - Becoming a Supermarket Family

- **1963** - With its new Plaid Stamps redemption program, A&P brings back the premium concept. With every purchase, shoppers receive plaid-colored stamps, which can be later redeemed for popular household items, such as snack trays and Lazy Susans.
- **1971** - A&P opens its first Warehouse Economy Outlet (WEO). This low-price warehouse concept, featuring displays of fast-selling grocery items in the original cases, is rolled out to 1,500 stores.
- **1979** - The Hartford Foundation and family members sell the majority of A&P shares to The Tengelmann Group of West Germany in the face of declining sales and profitability, as competitors follow consumers to the suburbs.
- **1980** - James Wood is elected Chairman, President & CEO. Under his leadership, the company closes operations in several markets, including hundreds of older stores and the majority of its manufacturing operations.
- **1981** - Beginning a new growth via acquisition strategy, the Company purchases 17 Stop & Shop supermarkets in New Jersey.
- **1982** - The Company launches the Superfresh banner in the Philadelphia area, emphasizing product freshness and strong customer service.
- **1986** - A&P acquires the Bronx, N.Y.-based Shopwell Inc., which includes 26 upscale stores named The Food Emporium. It expands further in New York with the acquisition of Waldbaum's, Inc. that fall.
- **1994** - A&P in the U.S. launches a new private label program, introducing four new brands across all of its banners: America's Choice, Master Choice, Health Pride and Savings Plus.

2000-Present - Innovating and Restructuring for the Future

- **2000** - The Food Emporium opens its unique Bridge Market store, located at 59th Street and First Avenue beneath New York City's landmark Queensborough Bridge.
- **2001** - A&P opens its first U.S. Food Basics store in Passaic, N.J.
- **2003** - To reduce debt and lower operating costs, A&P exits Northern New England, sells Kohl's stores in Wisconsin (which it acquired in 1983), closes all remaining Kohl's operations, and sells the Eight O'Clock Coffee division.
- **2005** - The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Inc. sells A&P Canada to METRO INC., a supermarket and pharmaceutical operator in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario Canada.
- **2009** - The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company celebrates its 150th Anniversary as the oldest grocery retailer in the United States.
- **2010** - The Board elects Sam Martin as President & CEO. Under his leadership, the Company embarks on a turnaround plan and files for Chapter 11 to enable it to restructure its operations and financial obligations.
- **2011** - A&P launches Woodson & James, a new line of premium-quality Angus beef featuring steakhouse-quality meat at affordable supermarket prices, exclusive to all A&P, Pathmark, Superfresh, Waldbaum's and The Food Emporium stores.
- **2012** - A&P exits Chapter 11 as a private company with 320 stores.