



In 1823 Robert Wilson purchased land in Highspire and borrowed \$900 to build a distillery. Within three years he had paid off that debt, built a house, had about \$1000 capital in grain, fuel and other raw materials, and had, in his words, "succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations". Robert's two sons would follow him in the business. The younger son, William Kennon Wilson would take over the distillery in 1863. The Wilsons sold the distillery in 1872 to Cobaugh and Ettia Messer who operated the distillery until it's sale in 1875. William Elliot and Benjamin G. Peters of Harrisburg owned the distillery until Mr. Peters died, November 1876. William Elliot purchased Mr. Peters interest in the distillery, February 1877 for \$3,750.

Within a few months Mr. Elliot sold the distillery to James J. Dull. Dull who either sold the distillery to Abraham Penrose Lusk, his brother-in-law, or acted as an agent for him in its purchase. According to A.P. Lusk's obituary he purchased the distillery in 1877 and "devoted is entire attention to his business up there until the time of his death" in 1887. Lusk Avenue, which runs adjacent to the north side of the

warehouse, was named after A.P. Lusk. When Lusk died, his will provided for the purchase of the distillery by his old business associate Charles Goldsborough of Baltimore. According to the property assessment appeal in 1889, Goldsborough paid \$20,000 for the distillery. Charles Goldsborough died in June 1903 and was succeeded by his son Charles Goldsborough, Jr.

Under Goldsborough's ownership Highspire Pure Rye Whiskey went on to be sold in North and South America, and Europe with expanding sales. But there was a dark cloud on the horizon--the temperance movement. In the early 20th century a new wave of attacks on the sale of liquor was led by the Anti-Saloon League. This culminated in the 18th amendment to the Constitution proposed by Congress Dec. 18, 1917, and ratified on Jan. 16, 1919. The amendment took effect one year later, Jan. 16, 1920. It prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation (but not the consumption) of intoxicating liquors. The amendment was implemented through the National Prohibition Act, or Volstead Act, on Oct. 28, 1919. While the 18th Amendment took effect in early 1920, the manufacture of whiskey at the Highspire Distillery actually ceased almost three years earlier. After the U.S. entered the First World War, Congress passed the Food and Fuel Control Act on Aug. 10, 1917. In order to preserve grain for food, it empowered the President to limit or prohibit the use of agricultural products in the production of alcoholic beverages. Implementing Treasury Department regulations prohibited the manufacture of distilled spirits from food grains as of Sep. 8, 1917. However, production of Highspire Pure Rye Whiskey effectively in May 1917 when the eight month distilling season ended. Because of the impending implementation of the food and fuel control act, production did not resume in the Fall.

While distilling ended in May 1917, not all activity at the Highspire Distillery ceased. The sale of whiskey was still legal, so sales, bottling, and routine warehousing operations continued. The Food and Fuel Control Act was intended as a temporary war time measure, so even though Prohibition was being discussed in Congress, the Goldsborough's may not have envisioned the end of distilling in Highspire when they decided not to restart distilling operations in the Fall of 1917. By the time the Food and Fuel Act was repealed on Mar. 3, 1921, the Volstead Act had been in force for over a year. When the Food and Fuel Act went into effect in 1917, the supply of whiskey on hand at the Highspire Distillery was reported to be below normal. Production had only been 1893 barrels in 1916 and 372 barrels in 1917 before distilling operations ceased. This was relatively low production for a distillery with an annual capacity between 7000-9000 barrels. Almost immediately the Highspire Distillery converted it's 7 story brick warehouse to commercial general warehouse space. In 1942 John A. Hartman of H. A. Hartman & Son purchased the large seven story brick warehouse along with the land on the eastern end of the distillery parcel between Front St. and Lusk Avenue. The warehouse was built in 1901 with the capacity to store 13,500 barrels of whiskey, but it was able to serve as a general storage warehouse, primarily for household goods for Hartman's moving and storage business. It was used by H. A. Hartman & Son for over 60 years. H. A. Hartman & Son Storage purchased the property, in 2016, from Ron Aciri a partner of John and Mary Hartman. We are excited to welcome you to our facility and look forward to serving you for another 60 years.

* Historical data provided by Donald Ruth & the Highspire Historical Society.