



*The Connecticut-Copperthite  
Pie Company's  
1914 Model T Pie Truck*  
by Mike Copperthite  
Georgetown, District of Columbia  
Great-great Grandson of Henry & Johanna O'Neil Copperthite,  
Founders of the Connecticut-Copperthite Pie Baking Company  
Incorporated in 1888

The story of this 1914 Ford Model T Pie Truck, bought new by our family, is really the story of Irish/Scottish laborers and indentured servants. These immigrants who made their way to America became field hands, farmers, and veterans of the Civil War. They started selling pies on Thanksgiving Day 1885 from the back of a wagon in Georgetown, in the District of Columbia, and over the next thirty-odd years built the largest pie baking concern on the planet. This 1914 Model T Pie Truck is the history of Pie in America.

At the time of its purchase in 1914, just months after the 25th Anniversary of the incorporation of the Connecticut-Copperthite Pie Company, the company had 230 wagons, 600 horses, and 15,000 employees baking over 50,000 pies...that were consumed daily! People would stop, stare, and wave at our fancy painted wagons that were on the way to deliver pies to markets, grocery stores, and our men in service. With the modernization of our cities and rural roads, as well as the introduction of the automobile to the masses, the time quickly approached for our wagons and horses to be used only for special occasions. For decades after, the wagons were used

in Remembrance Day, Labor Day, Trade, Suffrage, Inaugural, and Independence Day parades. Soon they were all retired and one special wagon went to the Smithsonian Institution, where it still resides today.

In late 1913, Ford Motor Company started delivering running chassis to Martin Truck and Body Corporation in York, Pennsylvania. Henry Copperthite placed an order for two dozen trucks to be fitted with the "Atlas" body. He and Mr. Stohman (who owned another bakery in Georgetown that sold other types of baked goods) took delivery of the trucks in early 1914 and sold many of them to other bakers in Washington, DC. Stohman went on to set up a Ford dealership and other local car dealerships.

This particular 1914 Model T Pie Truck survived because she was replaced as one of the daily delivery trucks by our Ford 1/2 and 3/4-ton trucks. She became a show car and was used for special deliveries and the aforementioned annual parades. In the early 1930's, our pie empire expanded along with consumer demand for fresh baked, high-quality pies and that demand reached all the way across the country to California.

Members of our family helped establish the Olympic Pie Baking Company in Los Angeles and the Model T was shipped west to become a showpiece and symbol of excellence. She was used in 1932 as a display vehicle at the Games of the X Olympiad as we served thousands of pies to the athletes and spectators. She was later driven in several Rose Bowl parades before being purchased by a florist who used her as a centerpiece in his flower shop for over sixty years. When we confirmed that the truck in the flower shop was one of ours, we purchased her in February 2013 and, with the help of *The Henry Ford*, Mr. Art Goldstrom (Goldstrom Auto Museum), and Mr. Gary Cooper and the members of the Southern Nevada Model T Club (SNMTC), she was restored and returned to Washington, DC. As a thank you, we presented the SNMTC with a Buffington Chair, a folding travel chair from the Model T era which is a very rare car accessory now. We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to the restoration and helped preserve the history of Ford and our pie truck.

Our 1914 Pie Truck is almost all original and only required the "freshening up" you might expect a 100+ year old vehicle to need. Her engine was rebuilt and we installed a 1919 transmission cover so that a starter, battery, and generator could be added. Her carbide headlights have modern lightbulbs in place. At some point her front axle was damaged, so a replacement 1914 axle was located and installed. She is virtually period correct and/or can be returned to how she left the factory with minimal effort. Her 100-year-old wheels were fine, but for safety concerns and convenience, we replaced the non-demountable wheels with the demountable type.

*Top: When this 1914 Model T Pie Truck was used to deliver pies for Connecticut-Copperthite Pie Co., pies were not boxed. They were baked in a tin and the tin would fit into a slot on the shelf you see pictured.*

*Right: The interior of the pie truck set up for people to view. Notice details like the oval window, the window in the door, and the corner glass. Original pie tin on the seat.*

*Opposite: The Pie Truck in front of St. John's Church in Georgetown, the Copperthite Family's church since 1885. Pies delivered to St. John's Church Senior Center continues to this day!*



*The original Connecticut-Copperthite Pie Co. Bakery, located at Wisconsin and "O" Streets. This photo was taken for the 25th Anniversary celebration in 1913, just before the first Model T Delivery Trucks were ordered and put in to service. The little boy on the corner is Andrew John Copperthite, my grandfather.*



**History of the Connecticut~Copperthite Pie Co.**

Henry Copperthite was the son of Scottish laborers who made their way from Antigua, in the British West Indies, to America in 1846 to become farmers, choosing to settle in Connecticut. As a fourteen-year-old, Henry drove a wagon for the 79th Highlanders of New York in the Civil War and was stationed at Georgetown College. Henry returned to Connecticut after the war and put his wagon-driving skills to work for a local pie maker, H.H. Olds & Co. Bakery.

Johanna O'Neil Copperthite's parents were literally placed as ballast on an empty coal ship in 1846, at the height of the potato famine, and shipped from Cork, Ireland, to "Little Ireland", Cardiff, Wales, where Johanna was born soon after. A few years later her family made their way to America. Eventually she met a young wagon driver from H.H. Olds & Co. Bakery in New Haven, Connecticut. Henry and Johanna married and honeymooned in 1869 in Georgetown, the place where Henry was stationed as a wagon driver during the war. They loved Georgetown and together they planned to open their own bakery there. Henry became part of the workforce at Olds Bakery and he and Johanna learned all there was to know about the soon-to-be booming industry of food processing, manufacturing, baking, sanitation, marketing, and delivery.

Their enthusiasm and hard work paid off and by 1888, family, friends, and Civil War buddies flocked to Georgetown to work at the newly-constructed modern pie manufacturing facility at the corners of Wisconsin and "O" Streets. Washingtonians consumed fourteen million of our pies annually and, along with our factories in New Haven and Bridgeport, Connecticut; New York City; Baltimore, Maryland; Richmond, Petersburg, Newport News, and Norfolk, Virginia; Memphis, Tennessee; and Omaha, Nebraska, we became the largest pie enterprise on the planet and the second largest bakery in America. By 1924, our nationwide fleet of Ford trucks was delivering over thirty million pies annually - over 65% of all the pies consumed in America. In Washington, every man, woman, and child in the District, on average, ate one of our pies every five days!



Henry and Johanna (O'Neil) Copperthite



Above: One of the original horse-drawn wagons, which is now on display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

Opposite page, bottom left: Connecticut~Copperthite Pie Company sponsored an annual pie-eating contest. This photo was taken in 1924. The boys are all city newspaper boys who received a day of fun at Glen Echo Amusement Park, just outside Georgetown along the C&O Canal.

Opposite page, bottom right: Members of Congress enjoying pie baked by Connecticut~Copperthite Pie Company as part of National Pie Day. This day originated in 1923 by the Pie Bakers Association, headed by Henry Copperthite, and was established because we could now ship frozen pies nationwide. We were the first company to ship frozen pies and the first kind was pecan. National Pie Day is still celebrated every January.



**HENRY COPPERTHITE,**  
 PROPRIETOR OF THE  
**Connecticut Pie Company.**

Seventeen years ago this November there came to Washington from New Haven, Conn., a man who was unknown to the residents of this city, practically penniless and without a friend upon whom he could count for aid of any kind. This man was Henry Copperthite, proprietor of the Connecticut Pie Co., the largest pie industry in the District of Columbia. After countless exertions and unceasing thrift, Mr. Copperthite started in the pie baking business for himself, and his first day's sales amounted to ninety cents. A striking contrast is shown when we state that during the Spanish war the Connecticut Pie Co. sold in one day at Camp Alger, Va., 19,000 of their pies to the soldiers encamped there. On August 1st last, Mr. Copperthite purchased the bakery in New Haven, Conn., where he learned his trade, for \$50,000 cash, and placed his two sons, Charles and Henry, in charge of the business. This bakery has a capacity of from 6,000 to 8,000 pies daily. The Connecticut Pie Co., of Norfolk, Va., controlled by Mr. Copperthite, has a capacity of from 8,000 to 10,000 pies daily, and a branch of the same firm in Richmond, Va., operated by Wm. Van Dusen & Bro., turns out from 5,000 to 8,000 pies every day. Mr. Copperthite owns a farm in Virginia of 243 acres, purchased four years ago, where he raises most of the fruits and vegetables used in his pies. The milk, eggs, butter, etc., come from the same place. In all of Mr. Copperthite's bakeries nothing but pies are made, and in one oven alone, here in Washington, 11,600 pies were baked in one day. Mr. Copperthite has but one "hobby." He is fond of a good trotting horse, and "Ida C.," 2.12½, and "Mattie C.," 2.21½, show that he knows a good roadster when he sees one. Mr. Copperthite is generous to a fault, popular among his employees, a G. A. R. man in good standing, and a credit to himself and the city.—J. E. G.

From "The Evening Star", a Washington, DC, newspaper, Oct. 1902.



MODEL T TIMES, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017

FOR 25 YEARS  
**CONNECTICUT PIES**  
 Have Maintained  
**THE HIGHEST STANDARD**  
 of  
**PURITY AND EXCELLENCE**

First, we have the "KNOW HOW."  
 Second, we use only the best ingredients.  
 Third, we have the proper mechanical equipment.  
 Fourth, every pie must have the proper amount of "filling" and be baked just the proper length of time to produce the "crisp" brown crust.

The Result is  
**PIE THAT'S GOOD**  
 GOOD to the Taste—GOOD for the Taster

29 DIFFERENT KINDS IN SEASON 5c—10c—20c  
(According to Size—the Quality is Always the Same—THE BEST)

Ask for Them By Name At All Grocers, Cafes and Lunch Rooms  
 If Your Dealer Will Not Supply, Please Write  
**Connecticut Pie Company**  
(We Make Pies Only) WISCONSIN AVE. AT OH Please Visit 29

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017, MODEL T TIMES

**Giving Back and Helping Those in Need**

At the turn of the last century, Henry and Johanna Copperthite were millionaires who never forgot where they came from. Henry co-founded the Humane Society and hired and paid a fair wage to people from all walks of life. Over the years we have provided pies and donations to the homeless at the Central Kitchen in DC, helped restore St. John's Church and other historical buildings in Georgetown, and given donations directly to the needy and to organizations that service the poor.

Today, our 1914 Model T Pie Truck serves as the "Pie Ambassador" at charitable events by giving and serving those in need. We provide pies and the proceeds from every pie sale go to seniors, students, and the homeless in our community, our country, and our world. It is our honor to serve the Veterans and organizations who have given so much.

We are so fortunate to have one of the few remaining 1914 Ford trucks. It is our hope she will one day reside at the Smithsonian Institution next to the horsedrawn pie wagon we placed there over a century ago. Together they will remind future generations of the importance of giving back, hard work, the Ford Model T, and the history of pie in America.

Thank you for reading about our truck, our business, and our family members who succeeded, gave, served, and became part of the fabric that makes America great! This Model T Pie Truck of the Connecticut~Copperthite Pie Baking Company is living history!

Connecticut~Copperthite Pie Co. was a wholesale business, supplying pies to the War Department, Congress, the military, markets, and grocers. Whole pies were offered in three different sizes: 6", 5 cents; 8", 10 cents; and 10", 20 cents. Besides ice cream, pie was the first dessert product that consumers could purchase at a market in America. Only fresh ingredients were used in the pies and much of the produce was grown in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, including apples, blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, and pumpkins. Demand grew quickly and the company was able to obtain produce from across the country, providing flavors to customers that they could never get out of their own gardens. The pies were uniform in flavor, freshness, and taste. Instead of doing all the work of making pie at home, it was done for you and it was very, very good!



**FOUR STACKS OF PIES**  
(Piled One on Top of the Other)  
**As High as the Washington Monument**  
 Is the Daily Capacity of the Bakery That Makes  
**Connecticut PIES**  
 It is the High Standard of  
**PURITY and EXCELLENCE**  
 That Has Created Such a Demand for  
**Connecticut Pies**

Each and every CONNECTICUT PIE is a far better advertisement than the best advertising writer in the world could write. Try one and you will not only realize that this is so but you will in turn increase your weekly output with your regular order.

"Good to the Taste Good for the Taster"

CONNECTICUT PIES are in the first place pure. In the second place they are wholesome and easily digested. The centers are of luscious fruits and cream while the crust of each CONNECTICUT PIE is brewed to just the right crispness that adds both to its appearance and digestive qualities.

29 Different Kinds IN SEASON  
**5c=10c=20c**  
(According to Size—the Quality is Always the Same—THE BEST)

ASK FOR THEM BY NAME At All Grocers, Cafes and Lunch Rooms  
 If Your Dealer Will Not Supply, Please Write  
**Connecticut Pie Company**  
(We Make Pies Only) WISCONSIN AVE. AT OH Please Visit 29

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017, MODEL T TIMES



Notice the 1915 fire extinguisher mounted on the left and the Buffington folding chairs in the crate.



The corner window was a special feature of the of Atlas-bodied trucks to help eliminate blind spots. This window is original and 102 years old!



These tools are original to our delivery trucks. My grandfather gave me a bag of tools as a kid and told me they came from the Pie Trucks. Only the hubcap wrench is original to this truck.



The Pie Truck has a unique back door lock. The key (handle) hung on a lanyard around the driver's neck. After placing the key in the lock, he turned it clockwise to release the deadbolts - one at the top of the door and one at the bottom - to allow the opening of both doors. Pies had to be kept under lock and key because if a driver ever turned his back, they would disappear!



Left to right: Gary Cooper, John Craft, and Tom Keenan, members of the Southern Nevada Model T Club, who restored the pie truck. For more on the restoration, you can view an episode of The History Channel's "Counting Cars" in which this truck was featured. Visit <http://www.history.com/shows/counting-cars/season-4/episode-22/gary-coopers-1914-model-t>

# Atlas Truck Bodies

The "Atlas" body was made by the Martin Truck and Body Corporation in York, Pennsylvania, which later merged with Parry Manufacturing Co. of Indianapolis, Indiana, to form The Martin-Parry Corporation. In 1914, Ford Motor Co. delivered chassis to Martin Truck and Body, which were then fitted with the Atlas body and shipped to the customer.

Unfortunately, no original photos of the 1914 Pie Trucks exist. This later picture shows a 3/4-ton 1919 Model T Pie Truck. Note the employee standing with the "pie carrier" shelf in his hands. This Pie Truck could carry about forty-five pie carriers. At twelve pies per carrier, that's 540 pies per delivery - and two deliveries were made per day per truck!



Library of Congress, National Archives



Although hard to see, this Atlas-bodied Model T Pie Truck was used by Columbia Bakery, an annex of our company.  
Library of Congress, National Archives



This Atlas-bodied Delivery Truck is on display at the Car and Carriage Museum in Luray, Virginia. It was ordered at the same time as the Copperthite Pie Truck and used at the Shenandoah Valley Dairy in northwestern Virginia.

61 AUTOMOBILE TRADE JOURNAL

Six-Post! Top Delivery  
**\$834 Complete**  
Loh, York, Pa.  
33 Other Perfect Body Models

**Regal Umbrella Co.**  
36 W. MARKET ST.  
UMBRELLAS - TRUNKS - LEATHER GOODS.  
BOOKS - STATIONERY - OFFICE SUPPLIES

**Specifications:**  
Capacity—1200 lbs.  
Motor—Four cylinder, 21 1/2 in. x 3 in., 20 H. P. at 1500 r. p. m.  
Ignition—Dial Magneto, high tension.  
Carburetor—Castor glass float chamber, dash adjustment.  
Transmission—Detachable three-speed, special heavy-duty transmission, full rubber bearings.  
Clutch—Large face gear, 1 1/4 in. shaft shafts designed to withstand hard service.  
Clutch—Atlas special II and II has integral with transmission. Double drive.  
Control—Left-hand drive, center gear-shift lever.  
Steering Gear—Double screw type Laxton, heavy duty, adjustable for wear automatic, 12 in. wheel.  
Frame—Front-steel, channel section, 4 1/2 x 3/4 in. 12 in. offset.  
Rear Axle—Full floating. Helical bevel driving gears, ground-steel housing. Brown-Lipe differential. Driver double solid bearings in rear axle and right of differential. Carry these bearings of left and front.  
Brakes—External contracting, 12 in. diameter, 2 in. face. Internal expanding, 12 in. diameter, 2 in. face.  
Springs—Semi-elliptic front, 2 in. x 30 x 7 ply; semi-elliptic rear, 2 in. x 40 x 7 ply. Special high-grade, oil tempered, with lashed eyes. Hardened bolts with cross eye.  
Tires—Regular equipment 31 x 4 Datas is non-skid rear.  
Wheelbase—104 inches.  
Body—Any one of thirty styles: open, 6 pane, panel, convertible, ventricle and semi-convertible truck.

**The ATLAS DELIVERY CAR**  
Is Founded on Experience

Ten years of the most careful designing, experimenting and testing are in back of it. Every mechanical detail has been thoroughly tried out and proved under conditions that would not be equalled during even the most strenuous service.

Read the specifications (herewith) of the chassis—decide for yourself whether any other light delivery car on the market today offers as much real quality. And then remember that on the chassis we mount 33 body models, each one a perfect sample of the body maker's art, each one as practical as it is beautiful.

Consistent quality makes for permanence—and to the man entering the motor field today this is of the utmost importance. He must handle a car that will not only sell, but that will stay sold and create sales of its own.

Write at once and learn details of our dealer proposition. We still have several good territories open for the right men—men that can make money with a money-maker.

**Martin Truck & Body Corporation**  
York, Pennsylvania

WHEN WRITING ADVERTISERS KINDLY MENTION AUTOMOBILE TRADE JOURNAL.

A later advertisement for the Atlas Delivery Car, available with thirty-four different bodies!

# Pie Brings Smiles!



Ladies take a snack break at the tidal basin bath house, now the tidal basin along the Jefferson Memorial in Potomac Park where the cherry blossoms bloom each spring. Circa 1923.

Today, the Pie Truck serves as the "Pie Ambassador" at charitable events by giving and serving those in need. Proceeds from every pie sale go to seniors, students, and the homeless in our community and our country. It is our honor to serve the Veterans and organizations that have given so much. Just like in the vintage picture to the left, pie still makes people smile!

Every fall the Copperthite Family donates pies at Katie's Cars and Coffee. Model T's are featured and proceeds from the sale of pies go to the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation, which supports schools and community projects in Great Falls, Virginia.



Myself and my wife, Kim, and our daughter, Keely. Pie is a family effort!



Preparing pies for donations, with proceeds going to Our Military Kids, Inc.



The annual Sully Antique Car Show held on Father's Day in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Left: A Veteran enjoys a complimentary piece of pie from the pie company that was founded by Veterans! Our honor, our pleasure!

Right: Kim and Keely man the Pie Truck.



# Related to the Story...

**The Buffington Folding Steel Chairs and Stools**  
 Endorsed by U. S. Trade Report  
 Made in various styles and heights, large enough to hold a man weighing 400 pounds and small enough for a child. They have been endorsed by the U. S. Trade Report as being the best chairs and stools on the market. They are very attractive and fold compactly. They are used for Automobiling, camping, fishing, etc. Very handy for house use. Heights ranging from 7 1/2 to 17 inches.  
 Finished in Japan or oxidized. Send for circulars and prices.  
 MANUFACTURED BY  
**C. A. BUFFINGTON & CO., Berkshire, N. Y.**



The Buffington Folding Chair, mentioned in the article, was designed by Calvin Buffington in 1912 to be used with the Model T. The chairs were made available for car owners to take to events where they may need extra seating, such as picnics.



**The Connecticut Copperthite Pie Co.**  
 For the best reasons The Connecticut-Copperthite Pie Company adopted MYLEX for their great fleet of motor trucks. Ask them—

**MYLEX**  
 GASOLINE  
 A PREMIUM GAS  
 (A PREMIUM PRICE)

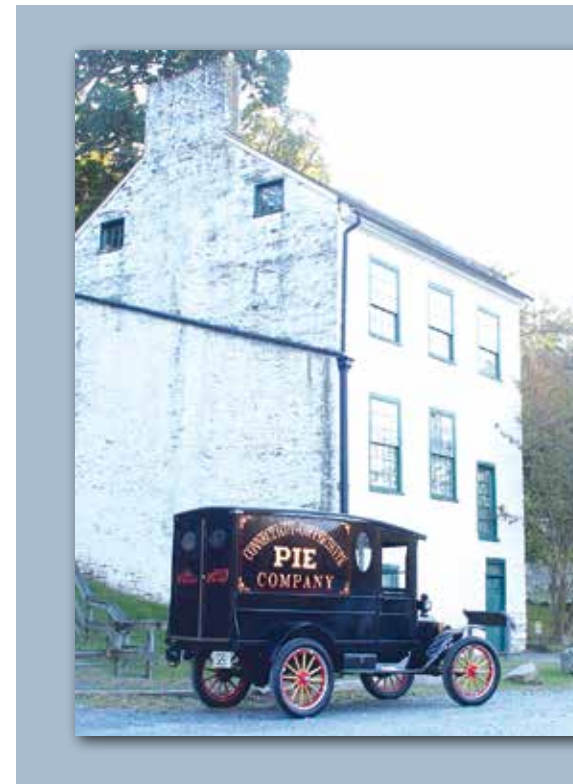
CONNECTICUT COPPERTHITE PIE BAKING COMPANY

Mylex Gas was a part of Standard Oil in the Washington, DC, area. Everybody knew Connecticut-Copperthite pies and their quality and the company was one of the first to adopt gas-powered vehicles to transport products to market. Standard Oil wanted to be affiliated with the pie company's brand and market, so they launched an ad campaign to promote their gasoline. Circa 1915.

Henry Copperthite did more than just make pies for the masses. He was an inventor and held twenty-two patents, including the one you see to the left, a pie safe for keeping fresh pies warm. He also held a patent for a device that allowed communications between individual railroad cars and the train engine, an invention that came about as a result of transporting produce by railcar. Each car could be loaded at the loading ramp/dock and then communicate with the engine to move forward.



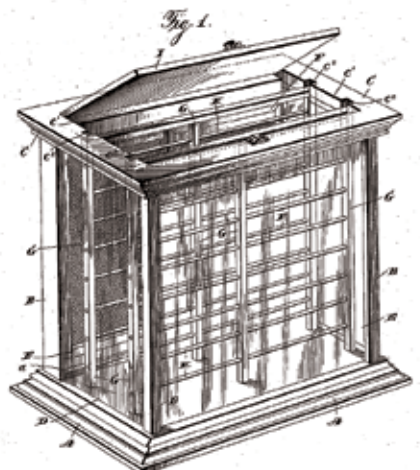
William F. O'Neil (cousin of Johanna O'Neil Copperthite) and his partner Winfred E. Fouse, founded the General Tire and Rubber Company on September 29, 1915. General Tire began as an outgrowth of the existing Western Tire and Rubber Company, organized by the two young Akron businessmen. Source: [generaltire.com](http://generaltire.com)



About the cover photo: the house in the background of the cover photo is the Abner Cloud House in Georgetown, located along the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. Built in the early 1800's, it is the oldest house along the canal. It was restored in 1909 and lived in by James Copperthite, Henry Copperthite's younger brother and head baker at the Connecticut-Copperthite Pie Company.

**UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.**  
 CHARLES F. SHIPMAN, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-HALF TO HENRY COPPERTHITE, OF SAME PLACE.  
**CABINET OR SAFE FOR PIES, &c.**  
 SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 568,706, dated September 29, 1896.  
 Application filed January 7, 1896. Serial No. 374,877. (Classified)

(No Model.) C. F. SHIPMAN. 2 Sheets—Sheet 1.  
**CABINET OR SAFE FOR PIES, &c.**  
 No. 568,706. Patented Sept. 29, 1896.



Witnesses:  
 Jacob Hutchinson,  
 Frank P. Rhinolds.

Inventor:  
 Charles F. Shipman, by  
 Edmund A. Russell, his atty.



Editor's Note: Thank you to Mike Copperthite for sharing the story of his family and their 1914 Model T Pie Truck, as it represents what Model T'ers value: family, hard work, dedication, generosity, and the preservation of the Model T! To learn more about the Copperthite family and their pies, visit [www.cocopiaco.com](http://www.cocopiaco.com).

