



# The Copperthite's of Georgetown

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*A Great American Story*



**Henry C. Copperthite**



**Michael C. Copperthite**

Hello. My Name is Michael Clay Copperthite and I was born on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1956 at Columbia Hospital for Women and my family has been in Georgetown since 1886.

I am the son of Robert Crittenden Copperthite (b. 12-29-1929, d. 12-5-1997), the Grandson of Andrew John Copperthite (1903-1975), the Great Grandson of Henry Clayton Copperthite, Jr. (b. 1878 d. 3-3-1911) and the Great-Great Grandson of Henry C. Copperthite (b. 12-5-1846 d. 10-13-1925). His parents worked as indentured servants on the Dunbar Plantation in Antigua. James and Mary Catherine Copperthwaite who married we believe at St. Johns Parish Anglican Church in 1844 or 45 is where Henry was Baptized Christmas Day 1846. James came from Kirr-coo-bree Scotland before meeting Mary Catherine on the Plantation. The release of slaves in 1834 and then the Great Earthquake of 1843, caused unsettled and difficult times for the British West Indies Plantation economy. So with hopes for the New World and the ending of their indentured servitude the new Copperthwaite family headed to America, Connecticut and New England where other Copperthite' s and Copperthwaite' s had lived since the early 1700' s.

My Daughter, Keely Alexa Crittenden Copperthite is a sixth generation Washingtonian on one side of the family and on the other side, our roots go back to Jamestown and pre-date the colonists arriving in America. We have ancestors who have fought for America in every conflict and this past year buried the 27<sup>th</sup> relative at Arlington (and other) National Cemeteries for service to their country, William Johnson Rowland (b. 3-1-1926 d.8-14-2010) who served in WWII. In WW I alone the Copperthite families from Georgetown sent 15 young men to liberate Europe.

In 1847, Henry C. Copperthite came from Antigua, the British West Indies, with his parents to Meriden Connecticut. His parents were farmers.

Henry Copperthite joined the famous 79<sup>th</sup> Highlanders of New York and as a Private came to Washington and was stationed at Georgetown College in 1861. The 79<sup>th</sup> fought at the Skirmish at Bailey's Crossroads and at Chantilly, Virginia before engaging in major campaigns at the Battles of Manassas Bull Run I and II, Fort Sanders Knoxville, Tennessee and Antietam. Henry Copperthite was at Appomattox Court House for the surrender of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern

Virginia and then marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC for the Grand Review before returning to Connecticut as a citizen of the United States.

The skills of wagon driver that Henry took back to Connecticut were highly prized in those days of apprenticeship, and soon he was delivering for a baked goods company. He decided that even though it paid less he would learn the baking trade and over the next twenty odd years, Henry became familiar with every aspect of what was about to become an explosion in the dessert, food storage, transportation, grocery store, sanitation, and marketing of mass goods to the general public.

In 1870, while on his honeymoon Henry and his wife Johanna O'Neil (b. 1 - 1850 d. 2-4-1921) visited West Washington, now Georgetown, and determined that it would be a great place to start a business.

In 1885, they returned on the eve of Thanksgiving with a wagon, horse, and \$3.50 to their names. He started baking pies and returned a one day profit of about \$100 in today's money. On January 1, 1887, the H. Copperthite Pie Baking Company began with a new partner and investor, T.S. Smith, at 1407 32<sup>nd</sup> Street N.W. and the newlyweds never looked back. By 1897 Henry and Johanna were millionaires in a time when the average family was making \$600 per year.

Twenty-five years after launching the Connecticut ~ Copperthite Pie Companies in Georgetown, Henry was producing over 50,000 pies a day in Washington, with factories on Capitol Hill, on M Street, and on Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown. Henry was joined in this endeavor by his family, who came to Washington, and by many of his Civil War friends.

Soon he purchased the bakery in Hartford, Connecticut where he first started in the dessert business, giving him factories there and in Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Petersburg, Newport News, Virginia, Memphis Tennessee and Omaha Nebraska.

In a day and age when shopping for groceries and the delivery of fresh baked goods was in its infancy, Henry Copperthite was a pioneer. He provided pies to the White House, the Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Federal Government becoming one of the largest manufacturers and purveyors of desserts in the United States. Our family provided pies and hard tack dough for the Doughboys training and fighting in the Great War (WWI). On average, every man, woman, and child in the District of Columbia ate two of his pies every seven days.

In an era when most advertising was the printing and the presentation of a business card, he initiated a unique print ad campaign directed at the housewife, with tips on *how to save work and time while extolling the virtues of eating pie* with patriotic and whimsical slogans and caricatures of "the Pie Man from Connecticut". Henry placed ads in all five daily papers in Washington virtually every day for some thirty years. Television, Radio, Tweeting, Facebook, and Email had yet to be invented, yet "The Man from Connecticut" and/or his products were known to more people in America for a longer time than just about anybody. Just a casual search on-line of the Library of Congress will pull up hundreds of articles about H. Copperthite from the Georgetown News: society events, news accounts of his travels, charitable activities, satire on how fat Washington was getting from pie as the "leading Pie town"

etc.,etc. In the News and Sports Sections of the paper, he was featured on a regular basis as he was at the top of one of the three most popular sports at the turn of the last century -- pacing and trotting horse racing.

As the pie baking demand grew, Henry acquired large tracks of land in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties. Around 1900, he purchased a 600 plus acre farm and structures at Burke Station, Virginia to facilitate the provision of dairy products for making his pies. He also purchased over 5,000 acres in Loudoun Country to provide fresh fruits and vegetables. A portion of his farm is now part of Runnymede Park in Herndon, VA. He also acquired land in Rock Creek Park, several lots in Georgetown, and throughout the city of Washington. Henry also bought land in Alexandria County, which is now Arlington, Virginia. He owned *Analostan Island which later became Teddy Roosevelt Island. Today, most of the milk bought locally comes from his farms and those of his partners and business colleagues' dairies and farms.*

At the turn of the last century the Copperthite Pie Baking Company had 230 wagons delivering pies to places like the Central Market downtown and grocery stores throughout the DC area.

In Burke Virginia, his summer getaway from the City, he built one of "the finest Racetracks in Virginia", with stables for 75 race horses, grandstands to seat 2,000 plus guests, four hotels, and stores for shopping and entertaining. Burke became the location for major spectator, sporting, and family events. During the summer months, it became the place where thousands of folks from all walks of life flocked from the city to witness and to participate in his various public events. He held match horse races, motorcycle races, car races, and dance contests -- for the social elite and the average citizen. President William McKinley boarded and raced his fine trotting horses there, as did Mr. McLean of the family that once owned the Washington Post. From Declaration Day (aka Memorial Day) through to the Fall, trains ran from Union Station, Georgetown, Alexandria, and Richmond carrying the crowds of people clamoring to witness boxing events that featured Jack Johnson, an exhibition baseball game with Ty Cobb and the Senators, or to view one of the first -- if not the first -- flyover of a sports venue by no less than the Wright Brothers on Memorial Day 1909. Until Prohibition, the elimination of track-side gaming, the decline of the horse, and the rise of the car for transportation, Burke Virginia was the go-to spot for the weekend to get away from the city's oppressive heat.

Henry was an inventor, holding patents for a communication device for speaking between cars on trains, inventing a pie safe to keep baked goods fresh, and co-inventing what is today the disc brake. He also worked on several other products which made it into everyday use, holding more than 22 patents. He also encouraged innovation in others. *One of his employees sold to Kraft what is now their famous mayonnaise recipe.*

Henry was a Founding Board Member of the newly revived Potomac Savings Bank at the corner of M and Wisconsin. He made loans to the working class at a time when the banking system mostly ignored these people. Over the years, he built several homes in Georgetown for his family, his workers, himself, and to sell to the public. Many brick and wood structures and homes that are over 100 years old in West Washington were built by Henry and his wife, Johanna, who looked after much of that side of his business. On *Copperthwaite Lane*, now

South Street where the Ritz-Carlton Hotel of Georgetown resides today, there are two historic trust homes from the city's first Mayor that were purchased and preserved by the Copperthite Family.

Henry C. Copperthite was a wagon driver and his pies were first delivered by horse-drawn cart, later by truck. His delivery wagons were in almost every parade of the city during his time and were part of the Inaugural events of his friends and fellow Masons William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

Back in Connecticut after the Civil War Henry also became firefighter for the Famous New Haven Steamer Company No. 5 where he drove a (horse drawn) fire truck for Battalion Chief Andrew John (King) Kennedy who was his friend and mentor -- and who was godfather to his son Henry, Jr. Later Henry, Jr. would name his son, my grandfather Andrew John in the "Kings" honor. Today, one of his smaller wagons is in the Smithsonian's Museum of American History and a truck he gave to the College Park Fire Department is still on display. As the Union Movement matured, his company was spared by strikes on delivery by the Transportation Union, which he helped found and support, now known as the AFL-CIO.

Henry served on the City's Centennial Commission, Georgetown's Planning Board, supported Home Rule, raised and gave hundreds of thousands of dollars for the support of Liberty Bonds, provided food for the needy and donated to charity, and supported veteran's pensions. Along with Harriett Beecher Stowe, he was a Founding Member of the Connecticut Humane Society for Protective Services of Children in the Workplace and Home and to Insure the Welfare and Prevention of Cruelty and Proper Treatment of Animals. He was a member of the Columbia Club - the premier sports club for cycling, rowing, trap and skeet, fishing, football, baseball and other sports. He raised and gave funds for the Speedway, a new drive to rival "Park Avenue" in New York, the scenic drive along Potomac Park. He helped secure funds for the establishment of a public beach in 1913, the Tidal Basin Beach Facility. He was a shareholder and a Board Member of many companies, including the Chesapeake Dry Dock Shipyard Company -- now the Newport News Shipbuilding Company -- where his baked goods went off to America's soldiers abroad.

He was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Georgetown, the location of many a family christening, marriage, and funeral. In his lifetime, he contributed substantially to the restoration and construction of the Church.

During all this time, his companies continued to grow. Just before the Great Depression, stock in the Connecticut Pie Baking Company traded at \$147 per share. After the depression, it was still trading at \$140 per share. Heurich Brewing, another well-known Georgetown Company, was trading around \$40 per share. His company was the second largest, non-government related employer in the city. Eventually, his baking empire became part of the Ward Baking Company of New York (now the Hostess Brands of Foods) and part of his contemporary C.W. Post's General Foods.

Besides his homes in Washington, DC and Burke Virginia Henry had hunting lodges in North and South Carolinas, Florida and a Camp Lodge in the Adirondacks in New York where many of Industrialists and new capitalists went to socialize and play.

He was a friend of Stilson Hutchins, founder of the Washington Post, and of William Wilson Corcoran.

*He had one of the first phones in a private residence and in his businesses. W.29 and w1729 were his phone numbers. The number 29 was for the number of pies that he sold. We think the 1729 was for the year Copperthites settled in America.*

Henry was horseman of the year in 1903 and was Co-Founder and Manager of the Brightwood Race Track in NW Washington. At Brightwood, he served as a judge, the treasurer, and events coordinator. At the closing of the track in its final season, the crowd -- mostly the working men and women of the region -- called him out for an encore that lasted for two hours after he had long since headed home. That year, he also sold a horse to C. Vanderbilt for a record sum.

"By leading exemplary lives, struggling valiantly against poverty and adversity", he was what many in today's society think is or was a myth as portrayed in the many Horatio Alger stories of rags to riches success. A penniless but uncommon man who became a citizen, who prospered, who was decent, a Freemason when being so was the measure of the man, who was a sportsman, an entrepreneur, who fought for his country, who employed his family, and who became one of the wealthiest men in America! Henry C. Copperthite, who helped shape his town and his city, is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown i.e. West Washington.

Founding Member Citizens Association of Georgetown

Isaac Walton League

Order of the Mystic Circle

Save the Adirondacks 1903

Chamber of Commerce of Washington DC

Board of Directors the Washington Post

Board of the Riders and Drivers Association







Burke Station, VA July 4, 1912

**TRACK OPENS**  
**BURKE STATION, VA**

FAST AND SAFE  
HALF-MILE TRACK

2,000 SEAT GRANDSTAND  
75 HORSE STALL STABLE

23 HORSES OF RARE SPEED  
AND QUALITY

TAKE 7:50 A.M. TRAIN  
FROM UNION STATION  
OR  
THE 7:52 A.M. FROM  
EIGHTH AND MARYLAND

FIRST UNDER THE WIRE.

**JULY 4, 1908**

H. COPPERTHITE  
PROPRIETOR



**FINANCIAL.**

Jas. G. Waters, president; Lynn O. De Lashmatt, vice president; George G. Hoteler, treasurer; Edmund K. Fox, secretary; Michael J. Colbert, attorney.

Open an account with

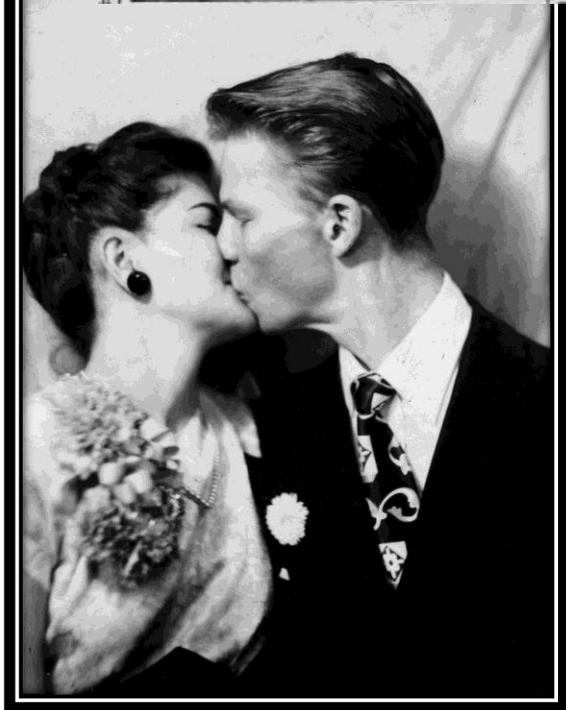
## The Potomac Savings Bank

Southwest cor. 32d and N streets.

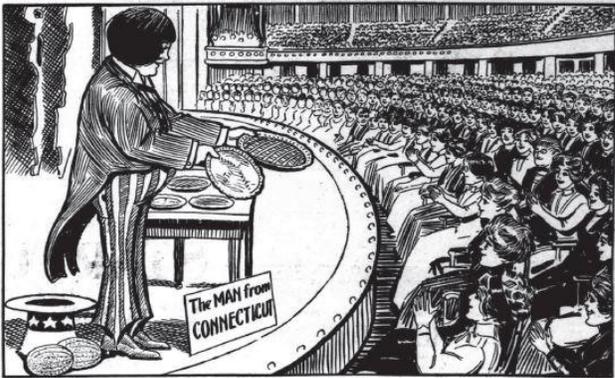
One dollar opens an account. 3 per cent paid on savings accounts. Conducts a general banking business. Commercial accounts solicited.

**DIRECTORS.**

Alphonse M. Baer.	George W. Offutt.
George G. Hoteler.	George W. Ray.
Michael J. Colbert.	George N. Saegmuller.
Henry Copperthite.	Edward L. Schneider.
Lynn O. De Lashmatt.	Isaac E. Shoemaker.
Edmund K. Fox.	John D. Sullivan.
Charles Jacobsen.	Joseph G. Waters.



Copperthite Summer Home 1899 ~ 1925  
 Know as the Silas Burke House  
 Burke Station, Virginia



Taking a Vote on the Best Pie Produced in Washington  
**CONNECTICUT PIES**

("Just Like They Make 'Em in the Nutmeg State")

Enthusiastically Acclaimed the Best in the District

When women, the best judges of good pastry, select Connecticut Pies as the best, it follows that they must be the best. All housekeepers agree with the "Man from Connecticut" that it is impossible to over-state the deliciousness of Connecticut Pies. Always of uniform quality.

**"Good to the Taste--Good for the Taster"**

Every ingredient used complies with the "pure food law." Every process conforms to the "health law." Crust always light and flaky, fillings of fresh fruit when in season, always full and juicy—the delight of all who taste them.

29 Different Kinds **5c--10c--20c** According to Size

Ask For, Insist Upon, and Accept No Other—At All Grocers, Cafes, Lunch Rooms and Fruit Stands

If Your Dealer Will Not Supply You, Phone or Write

**CONNECTICUT PIE CO.,**

WE MAKE PIES— ONLY

Wisconsin Ave. at Oh—

Phone West 29

...being to the United States Navy and have been loaned to the District of Columbia. General Harries has instructed Major Frank Averill, chief engineer, to prepare plans and supervise the construction of the wharf in the Washington channel of the Potomac somewhere near the present wharf which is used temporarily. This will be a valuable addition to the equipment of the Naval Battalion, and something which has been needed for some time.

**Forming a Light Artillery Battery.**

General Harries and Captain Robbins are now engaged with the preliminaries of the organization of a battery of light artillery. By July, it is expected, the battery will have been formed and will be on a firm footing like the other branches of the citizen soldiery. Since the close of the Spanish-American war

as interesting, and was watched by a large crowd of spectators. The members of the winning team in this match were: Capt. Alexander Summers, 41; Sergeant C. E. Grooms, 43; Lieut. W. M. Parrow, 42; Capt. Sheridan Ferree, 41; Private C. W. Whipp, 41; Private C. A. Russell, 41; Sergeant W. M. Farrow, 40; Private A. G. Richmond, 40; Private E. McGovern, 40; Lieut. F. W. Holt, 39. Total, 430.

Among the interested spectators at the matches Friday night was Col. C. Wainale, Imperial Japanese army, military attaché to the Japanese legation in this city. He is studying the American army methods. The following schedule of rifle practice at 200 yards, kneeling, has been arranged for next week:

Monday, Fifth Battalion; Tuesday, Fourth Battalion; Wednesday, Sixth Battalion; Thursday, Second Battalion; Friday, Naval Battalion; Saturday Revolver Club.

northwest. The Rev. M. Ross Fishburne, pastor of Mount Pleasant Congregational Church, conducted the services. The remains were taken to Harroville, Md., for interment. Mr. Davis has been a resident of Washington for the past ten years, having come here from Frederick county, Maryland. He was fifty-nine years old and was salesman for a prominent grocery house. Mr. Davis had been married twice. His first wife was a Miss Brewer, of Maryland. His second wife, formerly Miss Della Woodruff, of this city, survives him. Mr. Davis was well known in business circles in Baltimore and through Baltimore county

**LOCAL MENTION.**

For Malaria and La Grippe  
 Take "Ibex"—at all drugstores.



**IT'S CONNECTICUT**

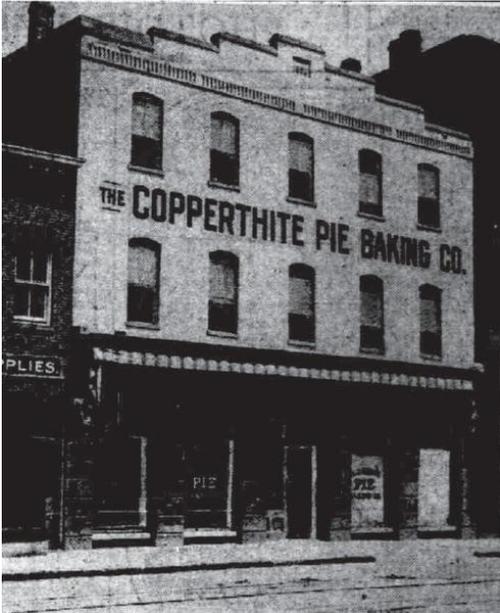
The Pies baked by The Connecticut Pie Co. are famous throughout every nook and corner of Washington—

Because they are uniformly delicious, and are baked in surroundings that are absolutely clean and wholesome, Mr. H. Copperthite, proprietor of the Connecticut Pie Co., has spent a lifetime in perfecting the art of baking pies. He excels in this particular line for the reason that his great bakery at Thirty-second and O Streets bakes no bread, rolls, or cakes—nothing but pies.

**12,000 Delicious Pies Every Twenty-four Hours.**

The ingredients of Connecticut Pies are the purest and best of milk, flour, and lard—the choicest fruits and the freshest eggs. The milk used is delivered fresh each morning from Mr. Copperthite's own farm, located a short distance from Washington. Connecticut pies are for sale everywhere—see that you get them.

**H. COPPERTHITE,**  
 PROPRIETOR  
**CONNECTICUT PIE CO.**  
 32d and O Streets.  
 Telephone West 29.



H. COPPERTHITE.

T. S. SMITH.

H. COPPERTHITE & CO.,

# Connecticut Pie Bakery,

1407 32d Street, W. Washington, D. C.

**SUPERIOR PIES,**

ESPECIALLY FOR FAMILY USE.

Persons buying Pies should take notice if our mark is stamped on each Pie.  
Look for the Star and Crescent, and the Initials H. C. & Co.

**Our Mincemeat is Manufactured on the Premises.**

The following is a list of the Pies made at this Bakery, and may be known by the annexed figures.

Apple .....	1	Cranberry .....	6	Currant .....	11	Strawberry .....	16
Mince .....	2	Pie Plant .....	7	Gooseberry .....	12	Fruuellos .....	17
Lemon .....	3	Prune .....	8	Blackberry .....	13	Custard, Pumpkin.	
Peach .....	4	Whortleberry .....	9	Raspberry .....	14	Tarts, Coconut.	
Grape .....	5	Pine Apple .....	10	Cherry .....	15		



**KEEP HIM SMILING!**

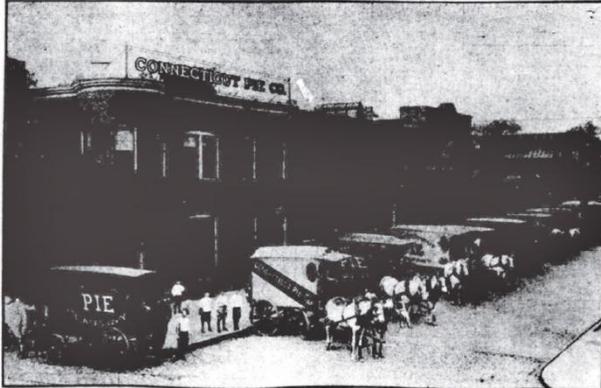
**UNITED WAR~WORK CAMPAIGN**

**NOV. 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>**

**BEWARE!**  
 Buy a Liberty Bond or our Boys will Bleed in battle

Connecticut Campaigns, Inc. Co.  
 Also a Great Buy!

**25,000 PIES DAILY**  
 Is the Capacity of the  
**Connecticut Pie Bakery**  
 If You Wonder Why **TRY A PIE**  
 "Just Like They Make 'Em in the Nutmeg State"

To Be Had at All Grocers, Cafes, Lunch Rooms and Fruit Stands  
 "Ask For, Insist Upon and Accept No Other"

**CONNECTICUT PIE CO.,** Wisconsin Ave. at Oh St.  
PHONE WEST 29

**COPPERTHITE EXPECTS MARK  
 OF 2:20 FOR HIS BAY STALLION**



**LORD JAY.**



**CONNECTICUT PIE COMPANY'S BAKERY**

811 Mosby Street.

Van Deusen Brothers, Proprietors. E. M. Van Deusen, Resident Manager.







HARRY COWPERTHITE.

