

January 20, 2010

Cooper Oven Thermometer Company  
By Judy Giguere

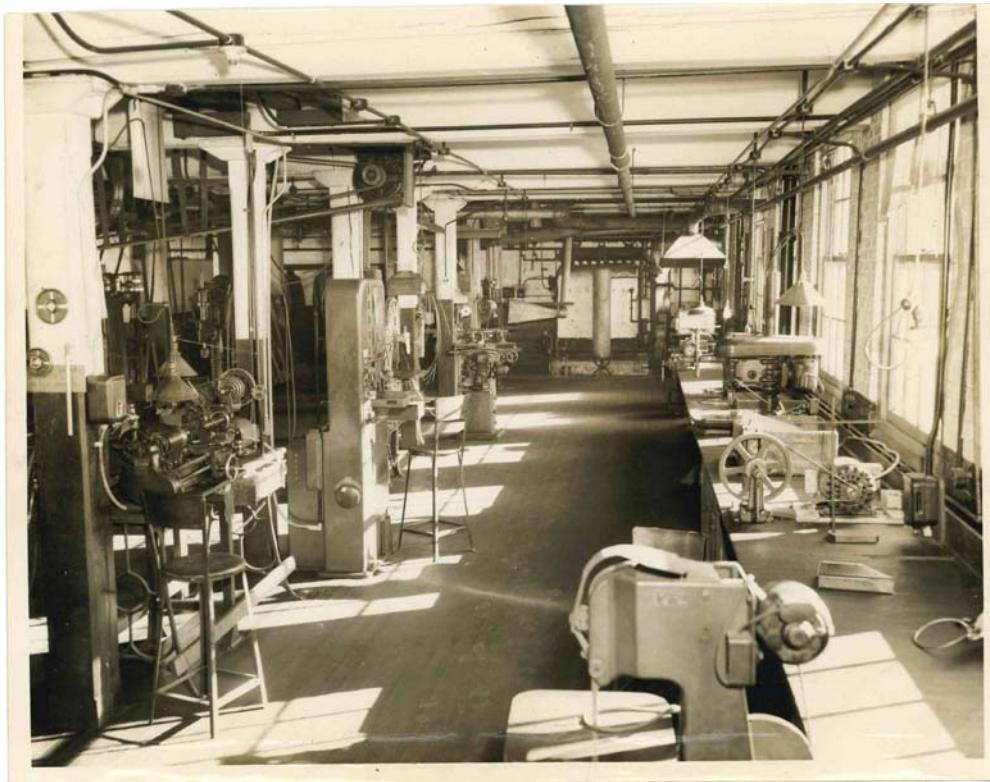
© All Rights Reserved – Judy Giguere

In the spring of 1886, the very first oven thermometer was made in Pequabuck! Former New Hampshire resident, David G. Cooper, inventor, after hearing many complaints about baking difficulties due to the guesswork involved to determine the heat of one's oven, decided he could make an instrument that would solve the problem. Oven thermometers did not exist previously. He experimented for several months and finally designed the very first bimetal oven thermometer in the United States.

Bimetal thermometers measure temperature by the expansion and contraction of two different metal alloys which move the needle on the dial. Mr. Cooper, gave his first order of 200 oven thermometers to the G. M. Allen Company of Pequabuck. The ingenious Mr. Cooper rented space along side the railroad tracks within the G. M. Allen Company. This was the start of D. G. Enterprises which later became Cooper Thermometer Company. Cooper Oven Thermometers were sold and well liked by consumers. It was not long before this product became world famous! The design improved and many large companies bought Mr. Cooper's thermometers. Mr. Cooper hired the Albert E. Whittier as Superintendent of Production. Mr. Whittier bought and set up the proper machinery and later became the president of the company after Mr. Cooper died in 1907. Mr. Whittier gradually bought out the shares of other employees and expanded the thermometer line. His son, Horace R. Whittier, joined the company in 1912 and succeeded his father as president in 1930.

This successful Pequabuck Company was purchased by the Wallace family in the 1960's and further expanded the company into other forms of temperature gages. Cooper Oven Thermometer successfully exists today as part of the Cooper-Atkins Corporation of Middlefield, Connecticut with ownership maintained by the Wallace family.

Photographs courtesy of the family of Horace Whittier.



THIS PICTURE SHOWS PART OF OUR TOOL ROOM WITH THE VARIOUS MACHINES SUCH AS LATHES, DIE MACHINES, DRILLS, FILING MACHINES, ETC.



THIS PICTURE SHOWS FOUR OF OUR PORCELAIN ENAMELLING BOOTHS

The porcelain enameling process.