

APS UNIT 28

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EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY



MISSENT MAIL FORCED NAME CHANGE

By Gerald F. Wiley

The hamlet of Calcium, located in the Town of LeRay in Jefferson County about five miles from Watertown, originally was called Jewett's Corners. It was later named Sanford's Corners for John Sanford who became the first postmaster when the post office was established in 1829.

Madison Cooper, born in 1868, spent his boyhood on his family farm near Sanford's Corners. He later moved around the country holding various jobs before entering into the butter and egg business with his father in Minneapolis. There he invented and manufactured a cold storage and refrigeration system. About 1904 he moved his business to Watertown and then to Sanford's Corners.

A problem arose when some of the mail for the Madison Cooper Company was mis-sent to Sanford in Broome County. As a result, the name of the post office was changed from Sanford's Corners to Calcium on May 1, 1911. Why Calcium? Calcium chloride was used in the manufacture of the Cooper refrigeration system.

A man of many talents, Cooper's interest in flower growing led to his establishing *The Flower Grower* magazine. He founded the Jefferson County Amateur Baseball League and built a baseball park at Calcium.

He also raised pigs. In a letter to a potential customer in 1917 he wrote: "I am anxious to get several of the swine men in this section interested in Tamworths as I believe they are the coming breed. They, of course, have a rather ugly appearance as the head is concerned, but otherwise they are fine."

None of Cooper's enterprises has survived, but the Calcium post office is still open.

Gerald Wiley photo