



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Madison Cooper Papers

NMAH.AC.1054

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Madison Cooper Papers
Date:	1900-1963
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1054
Creator:	Cooper, Madison, 1868-1946 Madison Cooper Company (Watertown, N.Y.)
Extent:	0.25 Cubic feet (1 box)
Language:	Materials are primarily in English; some foreign patents are in German and French.
Summary:	Madison Cooper was an inventor and manufacturer of refrigerating systems in the early twentieth century. Cooper received several patents for his refrigeration inventions, including several refrigerating apparatuses, an air-circulating system, a process for preventing the formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces and a refrigeration train car. The collection spans 1900-1963 and includes his United States and foreign patents, his publications related to refrigeration, and a few documents and photographs related to Cooper and the Madison Cooper Company.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Daniel Cooper, son of Madison Cooper, in 1963.

Provenance

Transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, now known as the Division of Work and Industry, 2007.

Processing Information

Processed by Cara Whiting (intern), April, 2011; supervised by Alison Oswald, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Madison Cooper papers, 1899-1963, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

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Biographical / Historical

Madison Cooper was an inventor and manufacturer of refrigerating systems in the early twentieth century. Born in Leray, New York, on March 19, 1868, Cooper moved as a young man to Minneapolis, Minnesota where he entered the butter and egg shipping business. He invented a cold storage system while working in the produce business. Cooper shifted careers to focus on cold storage engineering where he planned, designed and installed refrigeration systems in over 100 plants in the United States and Canada. Cooper moved the Madison Cooper Company to Watertown, New York around 1903 and in 1909, built a plant for the manufacturing of refrigerating equipment in Calcium, New York. The advent of mechanical and electric refrigeration in the 1920s superseded Cooper's system and his company dissolved in 1936, although at least one of Cooper's systems was still in operation in 1953. Cooper died on July 8, 1946 and was remembered not only for his contributions to refrigeration, but also as a horticulturist and editor and publisher of *The Flower Grower*.

Cooper received several patents in the United States and abroad for his refrigeration inventions, including several refrigerating apparatuses, an air-circulating system, a process for preventing the formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces and a refrigeration train car. He focused on simple and inexpensive construction that provided economic and efficient operation. Many of his inventions involved the use of a false floor that allowed cool air to flow underneath it and a perforated ceiling that released warm air. Other patents included cold air circulation within walls to cool buildings and apartments and focused on controlling temperature, humidity and air purity.

Scope and Contents

Series 1, Historical background, 1900-1963, consists of biographical information about Madison Cooper. The series includes obituaries, two diagrams of optimal temperature for food storage that were produced by the Madison Cooper Company, and three photographs that show Cooper and workers in the shop and office in Watertown and the plant in Calcium.

Cooper published articles related to refrigeration and specifically to his refrigeration systems titled "Chloride of Calcium in Refrigeration," 1900, "Natural Ice Cold Storage and the Cooper Systems of Refrigeration," 1901, "Ice Refrigeration," (1902), the Madison Cooper Company publication "Cold"(1914), and "The Cooper Systems of Refrigeration," undated.

Series 2, Patents, 1900-1908, contains United States and foreign patents related to Madison Cooper.

The United States patents contain drawings and specifications of Cooper's refrigerating inventions and are arranged by patent number.

Patents include:

Refrigerating apparatus (US Patent, 11,822)

Process of preventing formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces (US Patent 644,847)

Old-storage apparatus (US Patent 659,468)

Indirect air-circulating systems of cold-storage apparatus (US Patent 677,536)

Cold-storage apparatus air circulating system (US Patent 754,749)

Refrigerator cars (US Patent 881,902)

Foreign patents are arranged alphabetically by country. Patents for the process of preventing formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces include:

Austria Process of preventing formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces (4,075)

Canada Process of preventing formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces (66,959)

Canada Improvements in indirect air circulating systems for cold storage apparatus (75,602)

Canada Improvements in refrigerating apparatus (75,636)

France Process of preventing formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces (297,158)

Germany Process of preventing formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces (117,943)

Great Britain Process of preventing formation of frost on refrigerating surfaces (2,840)

Also included are an assignment of letters patent related to the refrigerating apparatus (US Patent 11,822) shared with George A. Dole and a contract related to the patents for the process of preventing frost formation on refrigerating surfaces.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into two series.

Series 1, Historical background, 1900-1963

Series 2, Patents, 1900-1908

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Horticulturists
Refrigeration and refrigerating machinery

Types of Materials:

Articles -- 20th century
Clippings -- 20th century
Correspondence -- 20th century
Pamphlets -- 20th century
Patents
Photographs -- 20th century

Container Listing

Series 1: Historical background, 1900-1963

Box 1, Folder 1 [Biographical, circa 1930-1963](#)

Box 1, Folder 2 Publications, 1900-1914

Box 1, Folder 3 Photographs, 1905-circa 1909

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Series 2: Patents, 1900-1908

Box 1, Folder 4	United States patents, 1900-1908
Box 1, Folder 5	Foreign patents, 1900-1902
Box 1, Folder 6	Legal documents related to patents, 1901-1902 Language: English.

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