

T. J. COOPER

From Compendium of N.D.

T. J. Cooper, now retired from active labors, is the possessor of extensive farm lands in the vicinity of Cooperstown, and makes his home in that city amid pleasant surroundings that are the result of a well-spent career. He was one of the pioneers of that region, and was associated with his brother many years in business enterprises, but for the past ten or twelve years has conducted his business alone, and is enjoying his declining years in retirement, although he personally oversees his land interests.

Our subject was born in Vermont, September 3, 1830, and was a son of Thomas and Caroline (Baker) Cooper. His father was a native of Vermont, and was a farmer by occupation, and was one of the pioneer settlers of Michigan, where he removed with his family when our subject was but two years of age. They resided there for a number of years, and then located in Minnesota.

T. J. Cooper was the third in a family of eleven children, and was reared in Michigan, and later engaged in farming in Minnesota. He went from there to Colorado and followed mining a number of years in company with his brother, R.C.Cooper, and they continued in business together till 1889, when the partnership was dissolved. Our subject owns two thousand acres of land in the vicinity of Cooperstown, on which he has valuable improvements.

Our subject was married in Red Wing, Minnesota, in 1858, to Miss Mary Washburn, a native of Illinois. Two children have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, as follows: Charles L., now a mining engineer of Victor, Colorado; and Julia L., now Mrs. Merriell, of Fruita, Colorado. Her husband is engaged in fruit growing and lumbering. Mr. Cooper is a member of the Masonic fraternity. He is a Republican in political sentiment, and is a man who keeps pace with the times, but does not seek public preferment.

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Thomas Jefferson Cooper was born near Shoreham, Vermont, Sept. 3, 1830 and was a son of Thomas and Caroline (Baker) Cooper. His father was a native of Vermont and was one of the settlers near Hills, Linn Sp. Washenaw Co. Michigan where he moved with his family when Thomas Cooper was two years old.

T. J. Cooper was the third in a family of ten children. Leaving home when merely a lad, to make his own way, Thomas Cooper went to Red Wing, Minn. where in 1857 he was united in marriage to Mary E. Washburn, a native of Illinois. Two children were born of this union; namely, Charles Ledue and Julia Lolla (now Mrs. W. A. Harriell)

For a few years, T. J. Cooper was a hardware merchant at Red Wing, Minn. In 1860 the California gold fever was at its height and Mr. Cooper with his family and many others started for Pike's Peak region, as Colo. was known at that time. On this westward journey, T. J. Cooper was the spokesman for the overland covered wagon train. Upon reaching a river valley cut on the plains, they planned to descend and for the night in a couple. However by the intuition of T. J. Cooper who had conversed and watched the movements of an Indian chief, who advised them to descend, they camped on a bluff. This wagon train went safely thru, but the train before and the train following theirs were massacred.

In Colo., T. J. Cooper's mining was both gulch and quartz in the vicinity of Fairplay, Colo. and Alma, Colo. and the tale of his "ups" and "downs" rival those of the Argonauts in '49. He was a partner of Gire Jo Jones of Independence, Mo., who as a miner was known by every prospector from Colo. to the Pacific. He made his great stake at this time and to better his fortunes in '64 and '68 during the great Indian war on the Platte River in partnership with Louis F. Bartels, a merchant in Denver, Colo. followed freighting across the plains from St. Joe., Mo. to what is now Denver, Colo. In 1866 found the adventurous miner back in the gulch mines

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NEAR Helena, Mont. After a few years he engaged in the hardware business at St. Joe, Mo. and with his profits ventured in the cattle business on the plains of Colo. After accumulating a small fortune he went to Chicago shortly after the great fire had swept practically over the whole city.

In 1878 there was a mining rush to Leadville, Colo. T. J. Cooper was one of the pioneers in the Leadville mining boom. Together with John F. Well and others of Chicago he developed several mines, including "Little Chief" mine which they later sold. T. J. Cooper's profit in this venture was \$150,000.

In company with J. V. Farwell, E. Oveitt and others of Chicago, T. J. Cooper went to Idaho in 1879 and purchased the Mayflower mine near Baldy Idaho, which was worked for many seasons with good results.

In the spring of 1880, T. J. Cooper and his brother, Hollin C. Cooper came to Dakota Territory and purchased many thousands of acres of land in what is now Griggs County. They founded and platted the town of Cooperstown, the county seat of Griggs Co. After some years, T. J. Cooper moved to Chicago but retained his interests in Griggs County.

In 1887-1888 he left Chicago and with his son Charles and his son-in-law, Wallace A. Merriell again returned to mining in Colo. After a few years he followed mining in the Alaskan gold fields for many seasons.

T. J. Cooper died (following an accident on a hunting trip) at the home of his daughter Mrs. W. A. Merriell in Fruita, Mesa Co. Colo., Jan 1, 1900. Mr Cooper's remains were interred in the family lot in Chicago.

His descendants are his son, Charles Ladue Cooper, of Cooperstown; his daughter, Mrs. W. A. Merriell of Fruita, Colo. and a grandson, Frank C. Cooper Merriell an engineer in the U. S. Reclamation service at Grand Junction, Colorado.

Death of a pioneer, T.J.Cooper
at Fruita, Colorado after several weeks illness.

1904

Born at Shoreham, Vermont, Sept. 3, 1830 and was 74 years old. His parents moved to Michigan when he was two years old, remaining there a few years and then moved to Minnesota. T.J.Cooper came to Griggs County in the summer of 1870 with his brother, Rollin C. and the big Cooper farm was opened up, the first crop being taken off in 1880. ⁻¹⁸⁸⁴ The deceased was a man of strong physique. Speaking of his last illness, Mrs. George W. Barnard in a letter says, "It began with a serious accident when on his annual hunting trip in the hills out from Grand Junction and Fruita. His horse threw him and it is believed some serious internal injury occurred. Typhoid fever set in." Three weeks ago he was a little better so that his son Charles was able to shave him. He then thought he would recover, so dictated a letter to his brother Rollin, saying, "Well, brother Rollin, it looks now as though we might have one more chicken hunt together. Get well and keep well, and don't run into smallpox down in Mexico."