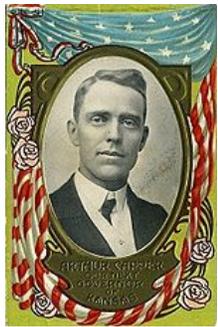


All together, Capper's circulation was approximately five million. Also included were two radio stations.

## Public Service

On December 1, 1892, in the city of Topeka, Arthur Capper married Florence Crawford (for whom Florence, KS was named). Florence was the daughter of third Kansas Governor, Samuel J. Crawford, who had come to Garnett from Indiana in 1859 to practice law. When Samuel Crawford filed to run for governor he declared Garnett as his hometown.

Arthur Capper ran for office and became the state's 20th governor and the first native-born Kansan to be elected governor. On January 11, 1915 he began serving as Kansas Governor for two terms (1915-1919). He also served Kansas in the U.S. Senate for five terms (1919-1949). Capper holds the Kansas record for the longest serving senator with 30 years. He retired from office at the age of 83. During his time in politics, Capper was a leader for farming states and was the first to promote pig and canning clubs, and was instrumental in the creation of 4-H. Today, there are more than six million young people across America involved in 4-H.



The Capper-Ketcham Act of 1928 saw to federal funding of agricultural extension work on a permanent basis, and it also

appropriated funds for 4-H clubs to educate rural youth in the field of agriculture. The Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 is often called the "Magna Carta" of farm cooperatives. The Capper-Tincher Act of 1922 provided federal government regulation of grain futures trading and exchanges and later included other commodities. The Capper-Lenroot-Anderson Agricultural Credits Act of 1923 laid the groundwork for future policies granting agricultural credits and establishing lending agencies in the field of agriculture. He also had a prominent role in the progressive movement called the "farm block" during the 1920s. Arthur Capper was a good friend to the American farmer and Midwesterner. In the 30 years with the United States Senate, Capper was a leading proponent and champion of agricultural issues, which endeared him to the hearts of many rural Americans. Capper's farming publications were also a household item in the Midwest at the time and connected him even more with rural America.

## The Legacy

The lasting legacy of Arthur Capper is The Capper Foundation located in Topeka. Con VanNatta, a Capper

employee, told Arthur Capper about the crippled children he had seen while delivering packages to the poor of Topeka for Christmas. The year was 1920. The inability of these children to receive proper care and its adverse effects on them moved Arthur Capper to use his resources to help. Capper initially paid for all the services, but as time passed fund-raising arose and Capper publications advertised their efforts. Capper's crusade to help crippled children became well known in the Midwest. Arthur Capper led the way in providing services for crippled children in Kansas and brought attention to their needs.



Arthur Capper was a good friend to all children. Arthur and Florence Capper never had children of their own, but children all over the nation benefited from Capper's unending devotion to better their lives and make them happy. "Children's Day" was held in Topeka annually on July 14<sup>th</sup>, Capper's birthday. This tradition began in 1908 and

encouraged all children to attend, without regard to race, creed, color or class. The party included a free carnival, pony rides, baseball games, free ice cream and refreshments for all. Nearly 20,000 people attended these events.

The Capper Foundation for Crippled Children became a non-profit charity on September 26, 1934. In 1947, the Topeka Orphan's Home was absorbed by the foundation and converted to accommodate rehabilitation programs for disabled children. Services offered included physical, occupational and speech therapy. Arthur Capper left a sizeable portion of stock to the foundation when he passed to assure its continuation into the future.

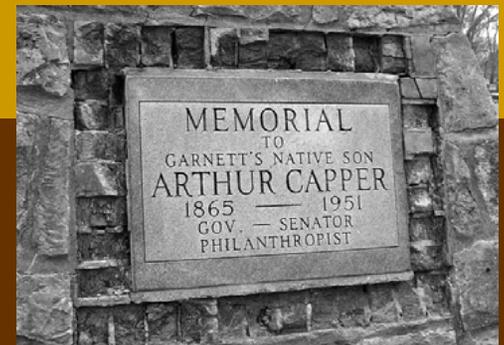
Today the Capper Foundation continues Arthur's humanitarian legacy after more than 80 years, providing over 3,500 services a year to over 800 disabled children, their families and the staff that care for them.

After retiring from the Senate, Capper returned to Topeka, Kansas where he continued the newspaper publishing business until his death. Arthur Capper died in Topeka on December 19, 1951 at the age of 86. He was buried in Topeka Cemetery in a plot adjacent to Governor Crawford. His parents, Herbert and Isabella Capper, are buried in the Garnett Cemetery.

Information resources, photos courtesy of: Anderson County Historical Society, Kansas State Historical Society, "Arthur Capper: His Humanitarian Roots & Legacy in Kansas" by Scott R. Rogers, and City of Garnett archives and staff photos (Susan Wettstein).



## Garnett's Native son, ARTHUR CAPPER 1st Kansas Born Governor



*"A Folksy man. He shakes hands, not like a man running for sheriff, but like a father and a friend of his people. A leader of middle class causes. A sort of incarnate institutionalized voice of the farm and small town, a quiet gentle voice, arising from a Quaker's kindly heart, but a brave voice that has never been hushed by fear nor raised by ambition." - Description of Arthur Capper by William Allen White.*

## Arthur Capper

Governor - Senator - Philanthropist

Although Kansas gained statehood in 1861, more than half-century passed before Kansas voters had the opportunity to elect a native-son to the state's highest office.

Arthur Capper was the first Kansas born governor, and he was also the first native Kansan to be a gubernatorial candidate. He ran for governor in 1912 and was defeated by 29 votes. Capper ran again and won in 1914 and 1916.

The City of Garnett recognizes Arthur Capper as one of its most famous sons with signage on US Highways 59 & 169. "Garnett, Birthplace of Arthur Capper, 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Born Governor" signage was made possible by the Kansas Department of Transportation with funding through the Garnett Transient Guest Tax Fund.

### Memorial Site

Arthur Capper Memorial marks the site of the former birth home.

Location: 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue & Cedar Street  
(416 S. Cedar), Garnett, Kansas

Hours: Open year round.

A kiosk located at the site provides information of local interest.

Learn more about Arthur Capper by visiting:

### Anderson County Historical Museum

418 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Garnett, KS 66032

(785) 448-5740 or (785) 867-2966

[www.historyandersoncoks.org](http://www.historyandersoncoks.org)

Summer: Tues-Sat, 1-4 pm or by appointment

### Garnett Public Library

125 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Garnett, KS 66032

(785) 448-3388

[www.experiencegarnettks.com](http://www.experiencegarnettks.com)

### The Man from Garnett...

On July 14, 1865, in a small, humble brick home once located at East Fifth Avenue and Cedar Street in Garnett, Kansas, Arthur Capper was born. His parents were Herbert and Isabella Capper, who were among the first settlers of Anderson County. His parents were faithful members of the Quaker Church and during his childhood Capper was taught lessons of honesty, morality, temperance and self-reliance.

Arthur's father, Herbert Capper, was an English immigrant who ended up in Kansas to help the cause of abolition and keep Kansas free from slavery. In 1862, Herbert married Isabella McGrew, a school teacher originally from Pennsylvania. Kansas had been a state for only four years, the Civil War had just ended, and the first newspaper in Anderson County, the *Garnett Plaindealer*, was established when Arthur Capper was born. Arthur was one of five children (Siblings: Mary May, Bessie, Benjamin and Edith).



### Aspiring Publisher -

Young Arthur Capper received a small toy printing press from his father for Christmas in 1877. With it he was able to print cards and small handbills for local merchants. At age 10, the aspiring entrepreneur also sold copies of the *Kansas City Times* to locals until he became employed at the *Garnett Journal* (former *Garnett Plaindealer*) in 1878 at the age of 13. There he performed odd jobs, placing the handset type, edited and even wrote a "Young Folks" column. One dollar a week was his starting pay and after serving his apprenticeship and becoming a real printer, Arthur Capper was collecting \$8 a week. It was said that before he was out of school, "Arthur had made and saved a considerable sum".

On May 23, 1884, Arthur Capper, along with 8 female classmates graduated from Garnett High School. On June 13, 1884, the then *Anderson County Republican* reported that, "Art Capper left yesterday to take a position on the *Topeka Capital*".

When Arthur arrived at the *Topeka Capital*, he found a large newspaper establishment in need of a large crew of men to set type by hand for local and telegraph news. Making print deadlines was almost impossible. Capper arrived for his interview and went right to work setting more type than any printer on the job had set for months, and he brought in cleaner proofs than the foreman had seen in years.

As a reporter Arthur Capper gained the reputation of being the most industrious man in town. He turned in more copy than anyone else and had a knack of making any story appealing to his readers. After years of hard work the opportunity arose for Arthur to purchase the *Topeka Mail*

and the *Topeka Breeze*. When the Bank of Topeka found itself the owner of the *Topeka Capital* it picked the most dedicated newspaper man in town to run it. It has been said that only \$2,000 in real money changed hands up-front. That was all Arthur Capper had. He was given all the time he wanted to pay the balance. Along with the purchase of the *Topeka Capital* in 1901, Capper built up the *Mail* and *Breeze* until they became the biggest farm newspapers in Kansas. Adding to his publications were the *Missouri Valley Farmer*, *Capper's Weekly*, *Nebraska Farm Journal*, *Missouri Ruralist*, *The Household* and the *Oklahoma Farmer*.

Arthur Capper was a good friend to his employees. The greatest tribute to Arthur Capper's nature comes from those who knew him best, his loyal following of employees and other newspaper men who per men who least by reputation. Those in his inner circle with at least twenty-five years of



referred to as the "Old Timers' Club" at Capper Publications. In 1944, one hundred of his 800 employees were members of this group and Capper referred to them as, "...more like partners than employees." He was more than comfortable leaving it to the men he had trained to actually manage his papers, printing plant and engraving company. The big properties continued to run just as smoothly and just as profitably as when Mr. Capper was in active charge all the time, which indicates his wonderful genius for organization and the picking of men who can be depended upon. Upon his death in 1951, Capper Publishing was the largest publishing house west of the Mississippi River with one weekly, two daily, and five state farm newspapers, as well as two national magazines.

## Experience Garnett, Kansas!

