

Kansas 2004

Arthur Capper

Publisher, Statesman, Philanthropist



Stats: Kansas Governor and Senator, Publisher and Philanthropist. Capper's support established the first boys' corn clubs in the West. Capper participated in the group that organized the national committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work in 1918 and helped to get government backing for 4-H. He sponsored the Capper-Ketchum Act that provided permanent federal appropriations for financial support for the 4-H Club work through agricultural extension.

Born: Garnett, Kansas

Nominated by: Kansas 4-H

Year Inducted: 2004

Arthur Capper was co-owner of Capper Publications, which included the "Farmers Mail and Breeze." In 1901, Capper started the "Mail and Breeze Golden Rule Club" for urban and rural youth who pledged to protect songbirds and other useful birds, to practice temperance in all things, and to observe the Golden Rule. In 1907, the "Farmers Mail and Breeze" promoted the Kansas State Agriculture College's Experiment Clubs' Corn Contest that led to the first corn clubs in Kansas, later known as the Capper Boys' Corn Clubs. By 1911, state prizes were also granted in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri. The clubs were considered the first boys' corn clubs in the West and grew to include tomato, beef, poultry, swine, and colt clubs for boys and girls.

Capper was in the group that organized the national Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work in 1918 and helped to get government backing for 4-H. The Capper-Ketchum Act provided for permanent federal funds through agricultural extension. He gave college scholarships to members and made a contribution to purchase Rock Springs 4-H Center. While Senator, he met with Kansas 4-H'ers attending the "National 4-H Camp," guided them around the Capitol, and often entertained them for lunch in the Senate dining room. In 1915, Capper established a loan program for youth to purchase pigs or poultry that continued until the depression. In 1938, Capper reluctantly relinquished his clubs that pioneered 4-H. He died in 1951.

Quote: "To strengthen self-confidence, one must be given responsibility and an opportunity to solve problems and reach goals in his or her own manner." - Arthur Capper



Members at the annual meeting of the Capper Pig and Poultry Clubs in Topeka, Sept. 10, 1919, posed with others at the Kansas Capitol Building.



Capper Pig Club and Poultry Club members picnicked in Lebo, Aug. 6, 1920. Featured speaker was Sen. Arthur Capper, benefactor of the Capper Clubs.



Otis E. Hall

Author of the 4-H Pledge & First Kansas State 4-H Leader

4-H Statistics: Author of the 4-H Pledge and first Kansas State Leader of Boys' and Girls' Club Work (Kansas State 4-H Leader). Served also as a full professor with Kansas State Agriculture College. Organized the first canning club in the nation, 1914. Received a citation for "efficient and patriotic service" from Herbert Hoover, then the United States Food Administrator, and was commended for "distinguished voluntary service" by the Kansas Council of National Defense for his work. During World War II, a 10,500-ton steel cargo (Liberty) ship was named SS Otis E. Hall in his honor by 4-H members in Kansas who earned the privilege by selling \$2,000,000 of war bonds.

Home: West Springfield, MA
Nominated by: Kansas 4-H
Year Inducted: 2004

Otis E. Hall, Kansas' first State Leader of Boys' and Girls' Club Work and author of the 4-H Pledge, served in Kansas from Sept. 1, 1914 to March 31, 1920. In Kansas less than a month, he began recommending a canning factory in every community. This plan would "make pin money for the young people and lighten the work of the women folk." The canner he recommended sold for \$15. Hall organized the first canning club in the nation in Leavenworth County, Kansas. The club of 19 mother-daughter teams won state and national honors in 1916. During the spring of 1915, project clubs were organized in corn, sorghums, pig, poultry, tomato, potato, gardening and canning, cooking, sewing and farm and home handicraft.

In 1915, 247 clubs were organized and 805 boys and girls completed work, and by 1917 membership grew to 13,321. In 1918, fifteen State Leaders submitted entries for a 4-H pledge contest conducted by O.H. Benson, Leader of Boys' and Girls' Work in the Federal Extension Office, Washington, D.C. Hall's was the winner. Under his leadership, youth clubs and numbers members grew, fair exhibits increased, and members participated in Farm and Home Week programs. In 1920, Hall left Kansas to become Hampden County MA Club Agent. His salary was second highest of any 4-H worker in the country, second only to O.H. Benson. In 1929, he became managing director of the Hampden Co. Improvement League. Hall died in 1936 at age 57.

Quotes: "We're not trying to make farmers out of all these boys. We don't care how many hogs or cabbages he raises; it's the boy we're interested in. We're trying to build self-reliance, good judgment and character. For many, 4-H is a stepping stone." - Otis Hall

In 1917, the Kansas Industrialist quoted from the Toronto Republican that Hall, in Kansas for hardly three years, had “considerable of a reputation. In fact, among the boys and girls of the farming communities, he is probably the best-know man in the state, excepting Governor Capper.” When he left Kansas in 1920, the Kansas Industrialist said he “knows more Kansas boys and girls by their first names than any other man in the state.”



Otis Hall with O.H. Benson at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, MA (circa 1924).



Hall in the side yard of his West Springfield home, 1929.



Display of Liberty Ship SS Otis Hall over a banner of the 4-H Pledge that Hall wrote.