

# 'Mr. Worthington' Rounding Out Half Century As Librarian; Recalls 'Firing Up' Wood Furnace

3/25/59

WORTHINGTON — Fifty years of service as the librarian of the Frederick Sargent Huntington Library in this town is the record being chalked up this year by Arthur Granville Capen. Born here on Dec. 4, 1881, he has played an active part in nearly every phase of the life of this community. He has held so many offices of trust through the years that he is sometimes called "Mr. Worthington."

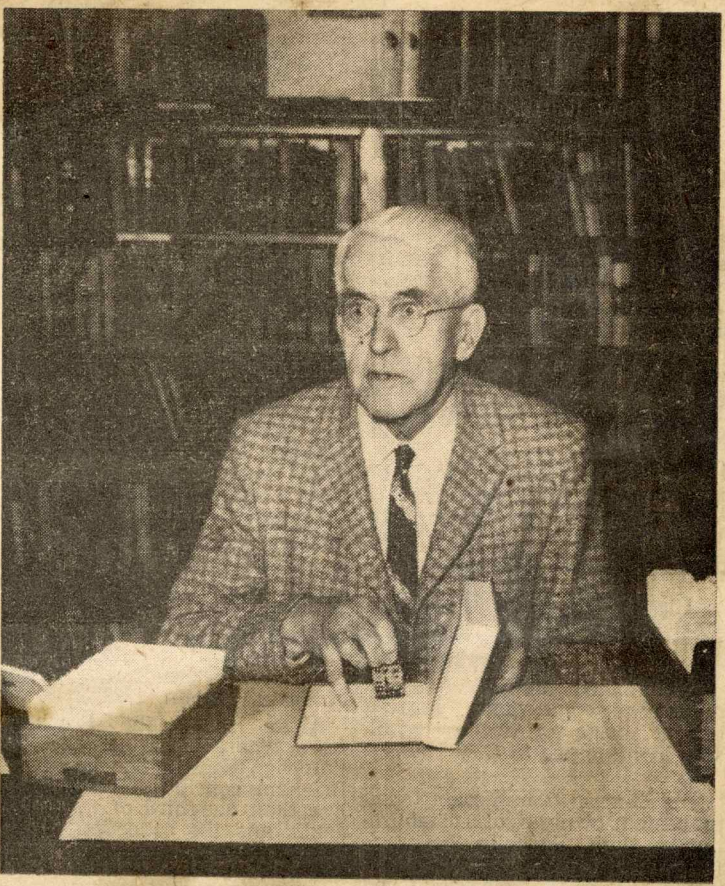
His days as librarian go back to the early years of this century when the books were kept in a room set aside for that purpose in the Lyceum Hall building, which also housed one of the town's district schools. It wasn't until 1914-15 that the present library was built. At that time the books numbered less than 3,000 while the total today is close to 8,600 volumes.

In this new building, Mr. Capen's duties included building a fire in the wood-burning furnace on cold days that the library was to be open. This chore continued up until 1947, when an oil burner was installed. However, Mr. Capen still "fires up" on chilly days with a fire in the library's big stone fireplace that is useful as well as ornamental.

Even though most folks think of Mr. Capen first as Worthington's librarian, his is a busy life all apart from his library duties since those amount only to part time on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and evenings.

A native son, Mr. Capen is a walking encyclopedia of dates and events pertaining to the happenings in Worthington for much longer than his own life span. His grandfather, Daniel Capen, came here from Windsor around the middle of the last century and settled on Capen St., in the house now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Day.

Mr. Capen's father, Granville, was just six years old when the family came here. His mother, Hattie Blackman, was also six years old when her family moved here from Peru to live in a house



ARTHUR GRANVILLE CAPEN

perclassmen for whom special classes beyond grammar school were held in the local town hall. The curriculum included Greek and Latin as well as higher mathematics and Mr. Bates says that it was Arthur who was sought out for the solution to the problems — in algebra especially.

Joining Worthington Grange 90 in 1904 at the time of its re-organization, Mr. Capen is now the only charter member still living in town. He received his 50-year pin in 1955. A loyal Granger, he is also a member of Hillside Pomona, the State Grange, and of the National Grange. Rarely missing a Grange meeting, he also has made a notable record for his attendance at Pomona and State Grange meetings.

An active layman and member of the First Congregational Church of Worthington since 1903, he went in 1952 to the bi-annual meeting of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches held in Claremont, Calif., as a delegate from the Hampshire District. Other trips to Florida, Texas, the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, Bermuda and to points in Canada are happy memories in his book of life.

Long ago, Mr. Capen's attention to detail and meticulous methods of keeping records were recognized and for more years than he likes to count, he has held the office of secretary, treasurer, or clerk in most of the organizations in town including 35 years as secretary of the Grange; 26 years as clerk-treasurer of the Worthington Fire District (the water department); 30 years as clerk of the First Congregational Church; trustee of the church for 20 years; organist of the church for 49 years; and

correspondent for the Berkshire Eagle of Pittsfield since 1942.