

Gordon P. Merriam Obit

by [Chris Merriam](#) on Sunday, February 13, 2011 at 7:04pm ·

Gordon P. Merriam

7/29/1899-2/16/1999

Gordon P. Merriam, 99, Blueberry Farm, South Bristol, died Feb. 16 at Cove's Edge Nursing Home, Damariscotta, after a short illness.

He was born in Lexington, Mass., a son of Edward P. and Grace Goodwin Merriam. He attended Lexington schools and was a graduate of Noble and Greenough School, Boston, and in 1921, of Dartmouth College; he obtained a master's degree from the University of Chicago in 1925.

At Dartmouth, he was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and Sphinx senior society. He was editor-in-chief of the Dartmouth Jack-O'-Lantern.

In 1916, he received Army infantry training at Plattsburg, N.Y. In World War I, he drove an ambulance on the Western Front with the French Army in the Norton-Jarjes Field Service. He volunteered for officer training at Plattsburg in 1918, and was commissioned at Camp Hancock, Ga., as 2d Lieutenant, Machine Gun Corps., U.S. Infantry.

Mr. Merriam was a volunteer policeman during the Boston police strike in 1918 and, with other volunteers, received an individual commendation and expression of gratitude from the Boston Chamber of Commerce.

He was a teacher at Robert College in Turkey, then entered the U.S. Foreign Service and was posted to Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Istanbul, Cairo, and Tehran. While with the Department of State in Washington, he became chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs and a member of the Secretary's Policy Planning staff. During his assignment to Egypt, he was an officio judge of the U.S. Consular Court in Cairo. He helped draft the text of the Truman Doctrine.

He spoke many languages, and during his later years studied ancient Egyptian history and hieroglyphics, and Spanish.

In retirement, he was a member of the U.S. Executive Reserve.

In 1949, upon medical advice, he retired to Walpole.

He served as assistant treasurer of St. Andrew's Church in Newcastle, and was a founding trustee of the Damariscotta Area Recreational Alliance, now the Central Lincoln County YMCA. He and his wife Roberta gave a tract of land now known as Walpole Woods to the DARA organization for hiking, cross country skiing, and selective forestry; this land was later conveyed to the town of South Bristol. He funded the purchase of land adjacent to the South Bristol Consolidated School for baseball and soccer.

Mr. Merriam recovered his health in Maine and enjoyed sailing, canoeing, trail blazing, mountain climbing, forestry, and vegetable gardening.

He was married in 1926 to Eunice Brandt, and by mutual consent they were divorced in 1934. He was then married to Roberta Hill Briggs until 1977, when she died of heart disease. He then married Mary Bean Smith, who died of lung cancer in 1980.

Mr. Merriam is survived by his wife, the former Helen Brooks Doell; a son, John G. Merriam of Bowling Green, Ohio; a daughter, Eleanor M. Kuniholm of Ithaca, N.Y.; five grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. Two adopted children, Ralph and Geraldine, died in their youth.

In accordance with his wishes, no service will be held and interment will be private. Arrangements are by Strong Funeral Home, Damariscotta.

Memorial gifts may be made to Miles Memorial Hospital, Damariscotta 04543, or to the charity of one's choice.