

Merriam poems in UK journal

By Dagney C. Ernest | Jun 09, 2014

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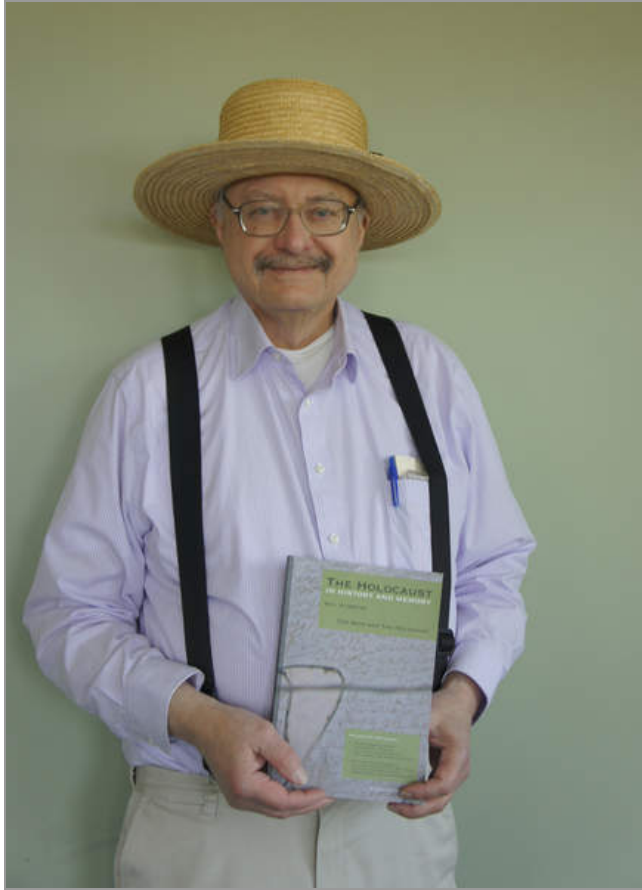


Photo by: Dagney C. Ernest

Kendall Merriam, who served as the inaugural Rockland poet laureate from 2010 to 2012, has had three poems published in an English academic journal.

COLCHESTER, ENGLAND

— Three poems by Kendall Merriam, the inaugural Rockland poet laureate, appear in an academic journal recently published by the University of Essex in England.

“The Holocaust in History and Memory, Vol. 6: The Arts and the Holocaust,” edited by Professor Rainer Schulze of the University of Essex’s history department, is the latest in a series of publications exploring various aspects of the Holocaust. The current volume includes essays, poetry, film criticism and images. It has two supplements: the full text of the play “The Earthquake in Chile or The Prisoners of Stutthof,” by Felix Meyer-Christian, freely adapted from Heinrich von Kleist; and a CD of “Songs For the Betrayed World. Holocaust Survivors' Poetry set to Music,” by The Life and Death Orchestra.

Merriam’s connection to the journal occurred fairly late in its compilation. The Rockland native is a trained historian, with a history degree from Gordon College in Wenham, Mass., and graduate studies in military and maritime history at the University of Maine at Orono and Mystic Seaport in Mystic, Conn. He also received grants to study historical research at Colonial Williamsburg and the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Merriam has long been interested in the Holocaust and Eastern Europe. He and his wife have traveled to Auschwitz-Birkenau and among the poems he wrote on that trip to Poland was “At Rubenstein’s,” which is included in the journal.

But it was Merriam’s curiosity about the Roma, sparked by a book about horses, that led to a connection with a woman named Ruth Barnett around the subject of the Kindertransport, which brought thousands of refugee Jewish children to Great Britain in months before World War II broke out.

“When she heard I had written poems about the Holocaust and the Roma, she suggested I contact the editor of the journal,” Merriam said, shortly after receiving his copy of the publication.

Schulze was very interested in using Merriam’s poem and ended up publishing three in the journal, “At Rubenstein’s,” “The Polish Jews” and “The Holocaust for Roma and Sinti.” The Roma are a widely dispersed people often referred to as Gypsies in the Western World; and the Sinti are a related population, of whom Django Reinhardt was a member. The Nazis condemned both.

The journal has been published yearly since 2008 and is available through the university press. For more information, visit essex.ac.uk and search for Journal THHM.



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Dagney has been providing Courier coverage of the local arts scene since 1985 and has helmed the multi-paper A&E section since it debuted in 2003. She has been a local performing artist, community and professional, for almost 30 years and spent a decade writing, producing and announcing on-air for several Midcoast radio stations. When not in the NewsNest, Dagney likes to be in motion.

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