

Iowa 2004



Born: Avoca, Iowa
Nominated by: Iowa 4-H
Year Inducted: 2004

Edwin T. Meredith

Publisher

4-H Statistics: Established a loan fund in 1917 to help farm youth develop projects. Helped form the National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work in 1921, and served as committee chairman. When incorporated, continued as a director and served on the Executive Committee. Served as US Secretary of Agriculture, 1920–1921; Member of the British War Commission; A director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago; Member of the US Chamber of Commerce board of directors for nine years, chair of the Agriculture Service Committee; Nominated as a 1924 Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate; Served on the boards of directors of several universities and financial institutions; Started "The Dairy Farmer" and what became "Better Homes and Gardens" in 1922.

Founder of "Successful Farming" magazine, Meredith helped start 4-H. In 1916 he added a "Junior Soldiers of the Soil" section as "a service for farm boys and girls and the Federal Club Work." Meredith established a loan fund of \$250,000 in 1917 to help farm youth develop projects. Over 10,000 youth received loans, pledging only their character as collateral. Eventually every Iowa county had a livestock club with assistance from the loan fund. Meredith's support of 4-H club work encouraged businessmen in other states to initiate similar loan funds. The fund continued until 1930. Meredith helped form the National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work in 1921, and served as chairman.

When the Committee incorporated in 1924, he continued as a director and served on the Executive Committee until his death. In the Committee's formative years, Meredith helped to pay committee debts. Since that time, the Meredith Foundation and the Meredith family have been active supporters of the 4-H program at local, state, and national levels. The Iowa Conference Room at the National 4-H Center, in Memory of Edwin T. Meredith, was supported by a major gift from the Meredith Foundation. The Meredith Foundation provided the first dollars for the Iowa 4-H Camping Center, with Hickory Lodge given in Memory of Edwin T. Meredith. For many years the Meredith Foundation provided scholarship support through National 4-H Council.



Cabinet meeting with President Woodrow Wilson (left); Secretary of Agriculture Meredith is third from right.



Members at the first annual meeting of the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work, 1921 (Meredith 2nd from right).