

Lawrence Gould

XI #3



SPRING 1983



OLD TOWN HALL,  
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# The Spanish River Papers

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Although Boca Raton schools have had many outstanding teachers over the years, one of the earliest went on to become a leading American scientist. Laurence McKinley Gould served as teacher of the Boca Raton School from the fall of 1914 to the summer of 1916. The school, only six years old on his arrival, had already seen six teachers come and go. Although only eighteen and himself a recent graduate of a high school in Michigan, Gould quickly made his presence felt in the small south Florida community. A forceful and long remembered teacher, he also organized community gatherings, helped found a Sunday School class, and with his students, probably published Boca Raton's first "newspaper."

From the first, Gould planned only a sojourn in Boca Raton. His ambition to return to Michigan and the university at Ann Arbor to study law was well known. He lived with the Frank Chesebros, made friends with the Myrick family (the builders of "Singing Pines"), Peggy and Bill Young (a Scots couple), enjoyed the ocean, hunted in the Everglades, and saved his money for his university days.

Although Gould enrolled at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1916, the United States entered World War I before he received his degree. He served in the ambulance corps, training in Allentown, Pennsylvania. From Allentown and then later Italy, France, and Germany where he was stationed, he sent long letters back to his Boca Raton friends telling of the hardships, but mostly of the excitement experienced by a bright young man in seeing a new and interesting world.

Returning to Michigan after the war Gould's interest in law was sidetracked by his love of rocks. He graduated with a degree in geology in 1921. In 1923 he earned a master's degree and received his Sc.D. in glacial geology in 1925. As a faculty member at Michigan he participated in a number of scientific expeditions to places like Greenland, Baffin island, and the LaSal Mountains of Utah. His education and experience all prepared him for his participation in one of the most renowned expeditions of the century: Admiral Byrd's Antarctica expedition.

Gould, appointed second in command of the expedition by Admiral Byrd, made a trip of exploration to the Rockefeller mountains with only two companions on 7 March 1929. A major storm hit their camp and wrecked their small plane. A 18 March headline in the **New York Times** proclaimed "Gould, Two companions, are missing in Antarctic Wastes." Byrd was able to rescue the stranded men, returning them to "Little America" on 22 March. Later Gould and a geological party made a 338-mile four-month trip overland by dog sled during the next Antarctica summer collecting data and specimens.

Gould returned home with the Byrd Expedition in early 1930, resuming his post at the University of Michigan. His work in the Antarctica was honored by a David Livingston Gold Medal from the American Geological Society in 1930 and a Congressional Gold Metal in 1931. In the same year a New York publisher brought out his account of the Antarctica adventure.

In 1932 Gould became professor of Geography and Geology at Carlton College in Northfield, Minnesota and in 1945, the college's president. On his retirement as president in 1962 he became professor of Geological Science at the University of Arizona.

In 1979 he returned to the Antarctica at age 83 with a group that included Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr, of Virginia, Admiral Byrd's nephew, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the historic expedition.

In this issue of the **Spanish River Papers** Geoffrey Lynfield, a local historian who has often written on Boca Raton topics, reports on his recent correspondence with the explorer and details the highlights of the life of the man who certainly must be considered early Boca Raton's most illustrious citizen.

Donald W. Carl  
editor

## LAURENCE GOULD

EXPLORER-EDUCATOR: FROM BOCA TO ANTARCTICA

by Geoffrey Lynfield

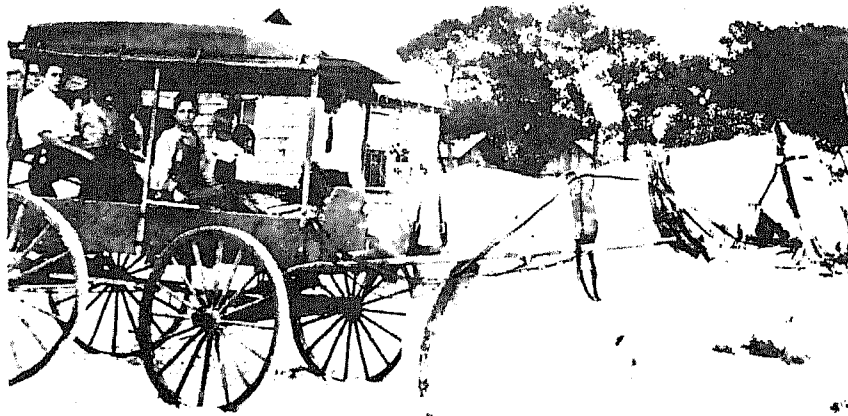
Boca Raton's first school was fortunate in having as one of its early teachers the eighteen-year-old Laurence M. Gould. After war service in the Ambulance Corps, Laurence Gould returned to the University of Michigan graduating in 1921 with a major in geology. Following trips to Greenland and Baffin Island his specialization in glacial geology earned Gould a place as geologist-geographer and second in command on Admiral Byrd's 1928-30 Antarctic Expedition.

Laurence Gould later became a College President and was the recipient of many honors. Another explorer named an inlet of Antarctica's Weddell Sea "Gould Bay" in his honor. This remarkable career which started in the "little red school house" warrants some further detailed examination.

Laurence McKinley Gould was born on a farm in Lacota, Michigan on 22 August 1896. He had just graduated from high school when he came to Boca Raton in the summer of 1914.

In a recent letter Dr. Gould told the story of how he heard of Boca Raton which in 1914 only had a handful of residents:

The Frank Chesebro family came from South Haven, Michigan where I attended High School. Their older daughter Ruth was finishing her high school then. As I recall I was talking with her about my wish to teach school for a year or two after high school to accumulate enough money to go on to the University of Michigan. I had passed the teacher's examination in Allegan County, Michigan where I expected to teach. Ruth urged me to try for Boca Raton school. I am eternally grateful I did for these two years as a school teacher (not 18 years old when I began) were amongst the most productive of my whole educational career. I liked the



Boca Raton's first school bus. The horse and wagon belonged to Frank Chesebro. Children were from Yamato, a community originally settled by Japanese and about 2 1/2 miles north of the Boca Raton depot. Laurence Gould is the driver Photograph: Boca Raton Historical Society.

Florida crackers as the natives were sometimes called. There I made life-lasting friendships with people whom I loved and respected. . . .

The Boca Raton school had started in one of Long's packing sheds in 1908 with a Professor Rhebinder as teacher and seven or eight pupils. Within the year, the school had its own small one room wooden frame building located near where the police station now stands.

The Boca Raton School initially had some Japanese children from the Yamato colony. This involved busing these children twice every day two and a half miles over rough road roads from the Japanese settlement which was located in the general area of today's Boca Teeca complex on Yamato Road. Frank Chesebro, a kindly man who had no children of his own in the school, provided the transportation in the form of his Model T Ford or a horse-drawn wagon. Laurence Gould did the driving.

The Yamato colony later had its own school with an American teacher, a Mrs. Hildreth Grey. Laurence Gould befriended the Japanese settlers. There is a cheerful picture in the Boca Raton Historical Society's collection showing Laurence Gould with a young pioneer from Yamato. This young man has been identified as Mr. Susumu ("Oscar") Kobayashi who died in 1975.

Laurence Gould lodged with Mr. and Mrs. Chesebro in Boca Raton between 1914 and 1916. Gould was editor and founder of a school paper **The Boca Raton Semi-Occasional Newspaper**. The paper was entered at the Post Office of Boca Raton as second class matter 6 November 1915. The postmistress at the time was Mrs. Peggy Young. A search of the records at the United States Postal Service in Washington, D. C. however does not disclose a newspaper or other publication authorized second-class entry at Boca Raton, Florida in 1915. The first second-class publication of record is the **Accountants Digest**, which was authorized on 2 January 1936. It is possible however that other publications were authorized as second-class matter prior to 1936 and were subsequently abandoned or revoked. The Postal Service does not retain records of such actions for more than one year.

In one of the first issues, Gould gave some historical details of the Boca Raton school. After one year of successful teaching, Professor Rhebinder was succeeded by a Mrs. Tasker who also taught but one year to be succeeded by a Miss Harper who after the same

length of time handed the school over to a Miss Johnson. Miss Johnson, like all the predecessors, found one year quite enough and was accordingly succeeded by Miss Esther Chesebro (Frank Chesebro's other daughter) who was the first teacher to teach two years. After Miss Esther, Laurence Gould came to the school teaching grades one through eight for two years from 1914 to 1916. There are a number of school pictures with Laurence Gould in the Boca Raton Historical Society's collection suggesting that by then the school had about twenty students.

At the end of the 1916 school year, Laurence Gould entered the University of Michigan and started his studies as a geologist. The following year, in the summer of 1917, he volunteered for the U. S. Army Ambulance Corps (the "USSACS"). Although not subject to conscription, Laurence Gould said "he was a conscript of his own convictions." Laurence Gould spent his first nine months, July 1917 to March 1918, in boot camp in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The Boca Raton Historical Society has a collection of letters written by Laurence Gould while in military service. The letters were mostly sent to Mr. and Mrs. William C. Young ("Bill and Peggy"), and make interesting reading. William Young was a stone carver who had come to this area to work on the Deering estate in Miami. The Youngs owned a store in Boca Raton and Mrs. Young served as postmistress.

The following letters were written from camp to Mr. and Mrs. William Young:

Allentown, August 7, 1917

We have done some very strenuous marching and have been very poorly fed. Got up at 6.30 and did 18 miles one way. Had a bacon sandwich for breakfast and for lunch or dinner had a roast beef sandwich. A man can't march too far on such rations. So many fell by the way and had to be picked up by ambulance. . . .

Laurence Gould already then was a keen photographer and had his camera with him in camp. He later became official photographer on some of his expeditions. With many of his letters he included pictures and some of these have been preserved.

Allentown, September 20, 1917

In order to make an adequate reply to your very interesting letter I must write



Laurence Gould with "Oscar" Kobayashi, a member of the Yamato colony Photograph: Boca Raton Historical Society.

it on the installment plan. . . . We are being worked awfully hard these days. . . . This afternoon we shall march from 1.30 pm until 5 pm in heavy marching equipment. . . . Tomorrow and every working day thereafter we must hike all day carrying our lunch in our haversacks.

Allentown, October 5, 1917

Dear Mr. Young, Those fine socks came to me Saturday afternoon. We have been hiking every day. This was my week in the kitchen. It is a dirty place to work. I have to wait on officers and then clean up after they have left and help with the dishes. I get awfully tired washing dishes. . . . This is the largest mess hall in any military camp in the world. About 3000 men at one time there. . . .

The following Friday morning he writes:

It is no fun to carry a heavy pack--weighing upwards of 40 pounds on one's back--a heavy medical belt filled with adhesive tape, iodine swabs, bandages etc. around one's waist and further we have to wear our heavy wool uniform buttoned up around the neck.

Laurence Gould did not realize it at the time but these route marches would stand him in good stead ten years later on the polar expeditions. In September 1928, the antarctic spring, Gould would lead a 1500 mile trek on skis with dog teams--one of the longest sled journeys ever made--across the ice desert of the Ross Ice Shelf to the Queen Maud Mountains.

Allentown, October 30, 1917

[Gould was still marching and was bothered by cold feet.] I should be very glad to get another pair of socks like you can make. . . . We sleep out in pup tents and need something to keep our feet warm. Had it not rained so hard I would now have been out in the country on a hike. A week ago Monday we went out for a hike and came back Saturday. During the night a heavy wind and rain had blown over our tent. The icy rain soaked blankets and clothing. The cook tent too was blown down and he had only coffee for breakfast.

We had to make eight miles with soaking

feet and clothing and no breakfast but some bitter coffee. . . . Several boys are now in the hospital with pneumonia as a result of exposure on the hike.

But camp life was not all a drudge. The night before he saw Harry Lauder at the Lyric Theatre in Allentown for \$1.50. "I wish you could have heard him sing. You would have enjoyed the Scottish Highland Band. . . ."

Allentown, November 28, 1917.

[Gould had received another package from Mrs. W. C. Young, Boca Ratone, Florida.] I don't know how to thank you for the socks. They are such handy things especially when we are still out in our dug outs. I have had more trouble in keeping my feet warm than anything else but I tell you these socks help.

It makes it so much easier to know that they miss me at home and Boca Ratone will be always half home as long as you people are there. . . .

Allentown, December 22, 1917

[Laurence Gould was feeling unwell and suffering from the 'grippe'.] I was on guard duty for 24 hours beginning on the 20th and I got my feet wet while walking my post--hence the grip and tonsillitis.

[He had five invitations for Christmas dinners.]

Allentown, January 3, 1918

[Gould writes from the YMCA to Mrs. Young wearing one of the helmets she had knit for him.] A man told me that they had the coldest weather in 37 years. The thermometer has been way below zero at times and it still continues in the neighbourhood of zero.

Laurence Gould did not then realize that ten years later he would brave temperatures of 40 and 60 degrees below zero on one of the longest arctic sledge journeys ever made.

With the war behind him, Laurence Gould lost little time to resume his studies. He had originally intended to study law, but switched his major to geology. He had become interested in this subject while rooming in the house of the chairman of the



geology department of the University of Michigan. By 1921 he graduated magna cum laude. Two years later he had his masters and by 1925 his doctorate in science. He specialized in glacial geology teaching at the University of Michigan as an instructor but managed to mix his academic work with practical expedition experience.

In 1926 he was geologist on the University of Michigan Greenland expedition under Professor Hobbs. The party of six scientists sailed on the Morrissey from Nova Scotia to Greenland. Gould acted as assistant director, geologist and photographer. The Morrissey, a two-masted Newfoundland fishing schooner had a number of mishaps. On July 24 she nearly crashed into an iceberg. Two days later she hit some rocks off Northumberland Island and remained aground for three or four days with a 45-degree list. She was eventually refloated but with the loss of her keel. On the trip home the Morrissey lost her propeller and the radio failed in a storm. However she managed to limp home making twelve knots under sail.

On an amusing side trip, four of the scientists with four native Greenlanders made a trek inland for eight or ten days. They ran out of food (having underestimated the appetites of the natives) and had to come back in a hurry on reduced rations. The party discovered a beautiful ice-dammed lake half a mile wide backed by vertical cliffs of ice. This lake was named Lake Laurence M. Gould.

The next year Laurence Gould returned to the Arctic as assistant director and geographer on George Palmer Putnam's expedition to Baffin Island. The party sailed from Rye, New York again on the Morrissey. They reached Newfoundland by June 20 in uncommonly bad weather and had trouble taking sights in the persistent fog. The Morrissey again had to undergo some emergency repairs but managed to reach Mill Island, an area not visited since 1631.

In August a party led by Professor Gould set out in a twenty-four foot motor whale boat to map the coast of Baffin Island. The boat was entirely open so that conditions were not notably luxurious, especially in bad weather--and the weather was almost continuously bad. As a result of their survey they found that Baffin Island, which is about the size of Connecticut, was some 5,000 square miles smaller than thought. This did not seem to matter a great deal as the island was "a wilderness of most deadly monotony, a landscape of most utter desolation, it was difficult to picture."

With this experience behind him, it was natural for Laurence Gould to be included in Admiral Byrd's First Antarctic Expedition. Professor Van Tyne introduced Gould to Adm. Byrd during a dinner in Ann Arbor. Gould apparently impressed Byrd as within a few months he was asked to join Byrd's expedition.

This expedition was large for the time. It took two ships, an old sailing ship the City of New York and a North Sea trawler the Eleanor Bowling to transport the 83 men, the dogs, the three aircraft and the housing and provisions to the Antarctic. It took three months for the journey and the City of New York which departed early was first to arrive with Commander Byrd aboard on Christmas Day 1928. During this initial voyage Adm. Byrd had a chance to get acquainted with his men. Writing in his own account of the First Expedition (Little America--Aerial Exploration in the Antarctic, the Flight to the South Pole by Richard Evelyn Byrd, Rear Admiral, U.S.N., New York, 1930):

My mind as to the men is now made up. Gould I have made Second in Command. A splendid fellow, competent, a brilliant geologist and popular with men. He has proper respect for the seriousness of the job. . . . He will do well I am sure and I am fortunate to have him.

Admiral Byrd did not have cause to regret his choice of Laurence Gould as his number two:

Prof. Gould stood apart in the nature of an institution by himself. If any man was liked by all, it was he. Larry was a blend of coolness and warmth. His friendly ways and his fairness endeared him to the Winter Part at Little America. Larry mingled and yet was always respected. He was not above telling of an occasional anecdote distinguished for its dry and incisive wit. But most of all he was an oracle.

When arguments waxed and flamed and drew to no conclusion, Larry was resorted to as the seat of judgement.

On Christmas Day 1928, Admiral Byrd sighted the northern edge of the Ross Shelf Ice and on the next day they made their first landing. Gould's task as Second in Command was to supervise the building of the base which they called "Little America." They had brought along several planes. Commander Byrd made a



Laurence Gould at Little America, Antarctica, 1929  
Photograph: the author.

reconnaissance flight on January 27, 1929 during which he discovered the Rockefeller Mountains, named in honor of one of their patrons.

Laurence Gould was very anxious to have an opportunity to get over to the newly discovered mountains to make at least a preliminary survey before winter (our summer).

Admiral Byrd writing in *Little America* (p. 162):

Poor Larry he has been compelled to dull his geological hammer on the end of boxes while the rocks in the Rockefeller fairly cried out for investigation. Such a journey would be very important, but, frankly, I am not eager to see him undertake it at this advanced period with winter so near. The weather has been so stormy and cold, and I am not sure the flight can be made without considerable risk.

Adm. Byrd's premonition turned out to be correct.

Laurence Gould has made a detailed record of the aborted trip to the Rockefeller mountains in his book *COLD--The Record of an Antarctic Sledge Journey* (New York, 1931). Laurence Gould with Bernt Balchen as pilot and Harold June as co-pilot and radio operator flew in a Fokker plane to the foot of the Rockefeller range on March 7, 1928. They landed some 140 miles East of the "Little America" base where their plane was wrecked in a 150 mile-an-hour blizzard.

Gould's two radios stopped working and by March 17th Cmdr. Byrd became genuinely alarmed and decided on an aerial rescue. They got a second plane, a Fairchild, ready and with Bean Smith as pilot and Malcolm Hansen as radio engineer on Monday, March 19th took advantage of a break in the weather and in a two hours' flight made a rough landing near Gould's camp. Adm. Byrd describes their meeting in his book *Little America*:

[The plane came to a halt in a smother of snow. June and Balchen came running towards the plane but at first Byrd could not see Larry Gould.] In a moment I saw him as well. He too, was on his way to the plane but his progress was casual, and he was the academician to the very end--making the dignified entrance of a professor who happened, let us say, to breakfast late and

found his class already in noisy session. It was so very much in character that I had to smile.

The explorers of the twenties were as much national heroes as today's astronauts. *The New York Times* covered the Byrd Expedition in daily features and its readers in their Manhattan armchairs were sometimes better informed of what was happening in Antarctica than the expedition members who were away from the base.

After the Byrd expedition, Laurence Gould returned to teaching and in 1930 became professor of geology and geography at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota. In 1945 Gould with some hesitation gave up teaching to become Carleton's president. He retired from this high position in 1962 and went back to teaching geology at the University of Arizona where he has been Professor of Geology since 1963.

When Dr. Gould went to Carleton, this was a relatively obscure coeducational college. Gould changed all that and raised the level of student scholarship and attracted dedicated faculty members. He became a powerful fund raiser and managed to prod wealthy alumni to donate \$12 million for a redevelopment program.

While busy as college president, Dr. Gould interspersed work planning the International Geophysical Year (IGY). In December 1956 Gould returned to McMurdo Sound to supervise work at the American bases on Ross Island.

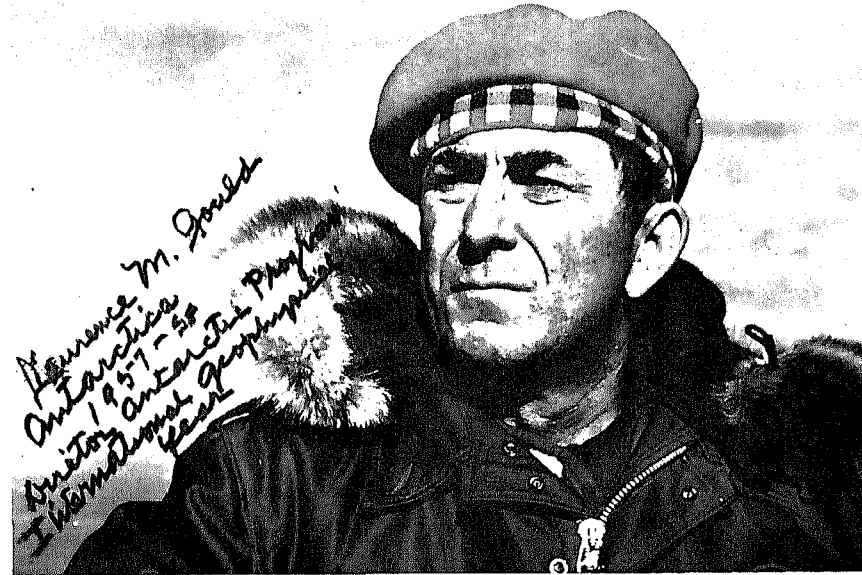
Gould published numerous learned papers on Antarctica and became a world-renowned expert on the area. He never forgot the intensity of the arctic winds which he experienced in the blizzard in 1929. Writing in the *Geographical Review* in 1957 he said: "For duration and intensity Antarctic storms are not duplicated anywhere else on earth. No words can describe to the uninitiated the experience of an Antarctic blizzard."

All this work has not gone unnoticed. Dr. Gould's career has been written up in *Look*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* magazines. His many accomplishments are listed in *Who's Who in America*. He received some thirty honorary degrees from Harvard, Columbia, Dartmouth, the University of Michigan, Carleton College and many other national institutions. Apart from the Congressional Gold Medal he has received the Distinguished Public

Service Award of the United States Navy, the Explorers Club Medal of New York, the Cross of St. Olaf from the late King Haakon of Norway, and the Distinguished Public Service Award from the National Science Foundation.

Laurence Gould, now 86, still lives in Tucson, Arizona. When recently approached he gave us some helpful biographical details. He ended his letter: "I have a very soft spot in my heart for Boca Raton."

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Laurence Gould, Antarctica, 1957 Photograph: the author.

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