

The Spanish River Papers

September 2014

Volume XXIII

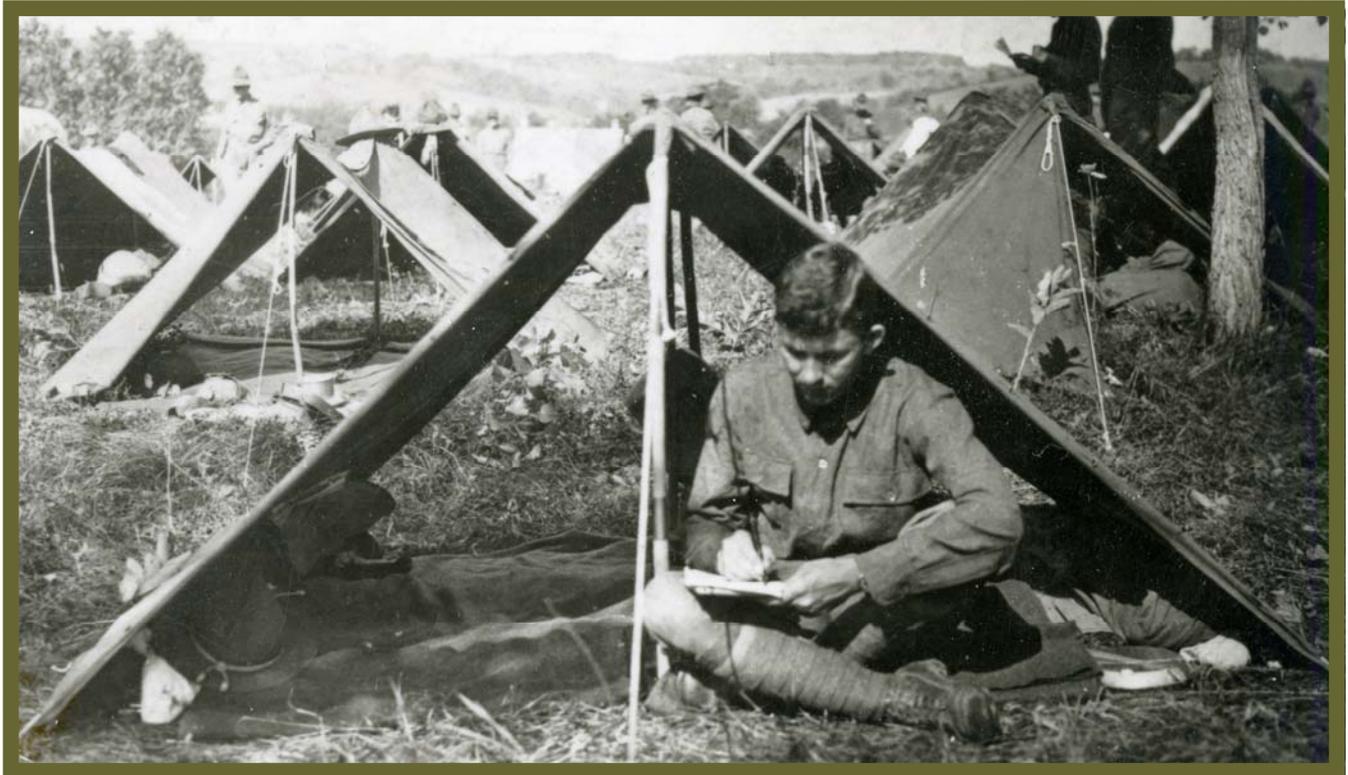


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WORLD WAR I LETTERS OF LAURENCE GOULD

By

Michael Wright

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Boca Raton
Historical
Society &
Museum



PREFACE

This article is based on a series of letters written to Peg Young and other Boca Raton pioneers from Laurence Gould, one of the town's first school teachers. He would later become known as a famous geologist and college president. Gould wrote about his experiences in basic training and his service in the ambulance corps for the American Forces in WWI ca. 1917-1918.

Author Bio

Michael Wright completed his B.A. in History at Florida Atlantic University in 2014. He is a former intern at the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum and the recipient of the 2012 Elaine Neefus Scholarship, awarded local students pursuing a career in history.

Photographs

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WORLD WAR I LETTERS OF LAURENCE GOULD
Edited by Michael Wright, September 2014

“Two of the happiest and most productive years in my education were those I spent teaching school in Boca Raton, Florida 1914-1916...” Laurence M. Gould; 15 October 1984



*A very young Laurence Gould
served as teacher at the Boca
Ratone School ca. 1914-1916.*

Laurence McKinley Gould came to Boca Raton, Florida from Michigan in 1914 to be a teacher at the one room Boca Raton School. Gould took this job as a means of earning money to attend college at Ann Arbor, Michigan. Gould's time in Boca Raton would gain him lifelong friends and a home away from home. Laurence Gould lived with the Chesebro family, fellow Michiganders, when he arrived. Frank Chesebro became a father figure to young Laurence. Gould also became very close friends with Bill and Peg Young, who were of Scottish descent; apparently they felt a shared sense of detachment from the rest of the community perhaps because of their non-Southern origins. At the end of the 1916 school year, Gould entered the University of Michigan and began studies as a geology major. In summer of 1917 he volunteered

for the U.S. Army Ambulance Corps (USAACS). Gould spent his first nine months in boot camp in Allentown, Pennsylvania and eventually saw service in Italy and France.

The following letters were donated to the Historical Society by pioneer Helen Howard. Most of them were written to the Youngs, with additional postcards to Harry and Frank Chesebro. They give insight into the struggles of Army life in World War One, such as the boredom of waiting for deployment and the constant cold that plagued Pennsylvania. The letters also delve into the local gossip of Boca Raton during Gould's service throughout the war.



Laurence's friends in Boca Raton: Bill and Peg Young, Frank Chesebro and Harry Chesebro

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: 4 June 1916

Boca Raton, Florida

June Fourth, 1916

My dear Mrs. Young,

I want to thank you for your letter of recent date. I intended to thank you for it to-day but somehow I couldn't find the proper opportunity and it seems that I am one who usually finds it hard to express his appreciation of anything where the time seems most proper to do so. But I shall read your letter many times and shall certainly cherish the memory of your friendship.

You spoke of grasping the opportunities for doing services which others thought too small. Don't you know there are really no trifles in this world. "Perfection is made of trifles," said Michelangelo, "and perfection is no trifle." Little things count wonderfully. Turns and reflections of the voice, phrases of speech, changes and expressions of the face, slight ways and attitudes, hand pressures, greetings in the street, letter-writing and many other unnumbered acts of the soul are full of importance.

Men have gone to battle for a phrase or a word. A smile-what a place it occupies in this frowning old world. You will never realize how great is the unconscious influence you have exerted and are now exerting in these ways. May the great master who cares for us all bless you and give you many opportunities for doing those services which though they appear small are really making so many people happier.

Perhaps some day [sic] I will tell you more about my mother and my earlier life than you can better appreciate my opinion of women and I am sure that the more women I come in contact with the better will become of that opinion.

Though it might not be in God's great province that we should meet in these realms again yet may I repeat that I shall always hold dear the memory of you and the many "little" things you have done for me. And whatever befalls either of us, believe me to be

Ever your sincere friend,

Laurence M. Gould

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 7 July 1917

Allentown, Penn.,

U.S.A.A.C.,

Section 90.,

July 7, 1917

My dear friends,

I have but a few moments left before my letter was so good that I am going to start answering it now to make sure that I will finish it after I eat.

I am mighty glad to be here. I do not think our country made any mistake by entering this war. We are going to demonstrate this fact soon. We are all anxious to get to France as soon as possible. Billy Sunday says if you would turn hell upside down you would find

“made in Germany” written on the bottom of it. I think he did not miss it far. We know that we are at war with the most barbarous nation that history records. I am told that the fatality is very high in the medical division of the army- this is the division I am in- so my future may not be very long, as it were. I do not think of those things however. I only want to get “somewhere in France” as soon as possible and after that it may be somewhere else. I am not at all afraid of where that place may be. [*Billy Sunday was a professional baseball player turned evangelical minister in the late 1890s. He was a major symbol of the religious revival movements of the early 20th century* <http://billysunday.org/>]

I am not subject to conscription-not being old enough but I just had to get into the fight anyhow. I am really a conscript to my own convictions. My dad told me that he wished I had not enlisted yet but my mother, hard as it was to have me go-never once told me not to. It is mighty hard for her. You see I was home only one day before I was ordered to report for duty. It was much harder than as if I had not gone home at all.

I think I would like to hear Alma Gluck as well as ever. But during the past year I have heard Mme. Homer sing twice. She sang “Coming Thru The Rye” and may I say that I have got to hear Gluck sing it in person before I will say again that she can do it better than Homer. She is certainly the most satisfying singer I ever heard. She has a most pleasing way with her. The last time she sang in Ann Arbor she responded to one encore by singing “The Star Spangled Banner.” That was quite the most wonderful thing I have yet heard. She sang a little song called “I don’t care If they Do” which is almost as cute as “Coming Thru the Rye.” [*Alma Gluck was an American soprano originally from Romania. She was one of the most popular singers of her day.* <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/gluck-alma> *Mme. Homer (Louise Homer) was a popular opera and classical singer of the late 1800s to her retirement in 1919. She later became a vocal instructor at Rollins College in Florida.* <https://sites.google.com/site/pittsburghmusichistory/pittsburgh-music-tory/classic/louise-homer>]

Your letter was so full of interesting news. I don’t know just how I can adequately answer it. I am glad Boca Ratone is growing so fast. I suppose we may need all the new youngsters just growing up if the war lasts long. For the Germans will certainly decrease the size of our army somewhat before the Stars and Stripes float over Berlin-and my dear friend-I do not want to come back until the Stars and Stripes are actually floating there-or until we are completely rid of the Kaiser and his breed. I do not know if there is a Hell but if there is the Kaiser will have to take a flying machine to get that high. When he gets in hell he will pollute the morals of 3/3 of the people there too.

I have just returned from supper-or from mess as we call it. And mess is just the name for it. Our grub is simply fierce. I eat down town as often as I can afford it and can get away from camp.

I should like to see your new house. It must be very comfortable if one can judge from the picture.

You tell me Mrs. Smith is going to change her name-what is she going to change it to? To Myrick?-Now that was a dreadful thing for me to write wasn't it. But do you know Mr. Chesebro wrote me one time and told me about some rather unkind things that Mr. Myrick had done. I am sorry too. But Mr. Chesebro has been such a wonderful friend to me that an offense to him is one to me. - This is strictly confidential and now that I have written it I wish it were not written but as Pilate said "What I have written I have written." I am glad you have someone to help you in your work for you need it. I can imagine your life is quite happy now. I should be very happy just to be back there a little while and see all you people who were so good to me and still continue in your goodness to me. [*William and Mamie Myrick moved to Boca Raton in the 1910s and built Singing Pines now home to the Children's Museum. Mrs. Smith was a friend of the Myricks according to Frank Chesebro's 1916 diary.*]



The Myrick family on the front porch of Singing Pines. From left Robert, Mamie, Aldah, William and Joseph.

I have perhaps changed a little since I left Boca Ratone so I am sending you a photograph of myself in a few days-you will notice that I am wearing spectacles in the picture-I don't wear them now-but I used to when I was doing so much studying. I hope I shall not be wanting in letters but believe me-letters like yours are always refreshing and welcome indeed-so don't think about how many others may write to me.

It helps so much to know that one is thought of so kindly- I am grateful to you for your good wishes. I shall try hard to live up to your expectations and even if my future is short I hope to make it one my friends may be proud of.

Yours faithfully just,

“Laddie”

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 23 July 1917

Allentown, Penns.,

U.S.A.A.C.

Section 90

July 23- '17

My dear friends,

I have time for just a word this morning. I am pretty busy and I guess we have got to change our quarters in a little while. We have been sleeping in the old horse stalls and I guess we will just move up a few stalls. They want the ones we are now in to store medical supplies in.

I am writing chiefly to tell you that I am sending you a photograph of myself and a post card taken since I came here. The post card is not very good. I'll send you a better one later as soon as I have time to take one.

It is hard to get cardboard and paper for packing things here so I am sending you two photographs. Will you please keep one and hand the other one to Mr. Chesebro when he comes in for his mail some time. That will save me the trouble of making two packages.

And so just now I will not attempt to answer your letter-I'll do that sometime soon. I'll just send you my pictures this time and until I have time to write I am yours with affectionate regard,

Laurence.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 26 July 1917

Thursday July 26, 1917

My dear friends,

I have been wondering today if the weather down there could possibly be any hotter than it is here now. The heat seems much more intense here than it used to down there. But then it would be pretty hot anywhere to dress in a heavy flannel shirt with both the sleeves and the collar tightly buttoned and a heavy pack over one shoulder: And here we have no ocean to jump into to cool off. But we do have 200 showers (icy cold) for 5000 men and of course in such a crowd one can't enjoy a bath very much.

Your letter was so interesting and full of news. Though hardly counted among my intimate friends, I am always glad to hear of any new pranks of Kitty and the other notables still [?] Boca Ratone.

I am very glad to hear that the new store is not running you out of business. I have heard very little about it but before I left Boca Ratone B.B approached me once and proposed seriously to build a store on his lot if I would go in partnership with him and do the clerking and business end of the thing. Naturally I laughed at the proposition. I don't know whether I ever mentioned it to anyone else before or not. [*B.B. is Burt Raulerson who built the Raulerson House. Later he was one of the first town commissioners.*]

Today I had a letter from Mr. Chesebro. His opinion of Mr. Booth is evidently quite like yours. He says they have not yet hired a teacher for the coming year. He says he told Long and Raulerson to go ahead and hire the teacher since he had no children but Raulerson had gone on vacation and Mr. Long was so badly disappointed in Booth that he hesitated about hiring a teacher. Evidently they are afraid of Mrs. Brown. [*George Long was one of Boca Raton's earliest pioneers, and became the first appointed mayor. Long was an agent for the Florida East Coast Railway company. Clementine Brown, whose husband John was the first elected mayor, was one of the earliest and longest serving school teachers. Mr. Booth was a local resident who was friends with Frank Chesebro.*]

I am glad you now have your house finished. It must indeed be delightful to have your own house in such a delightful location. Indeed I should like to occupy the bench in your piazza-but I am not sure that I have any girl-that is any particular one. I guess you would have to occupy it with me.

To-morrow night I have an invitation out to dinner and I shall be mighty glad to go too and get away from the mess we have here. It is always refreshing to get out and eat like human beings again. I fear I shall forget all my table manners. Last Sunday I had a most delightful dinner. I am having some dental work done. The dentist appreciates our position out here and he had me to dinner at his house along with seven other "Usaacs". Now you don't know what this word usaac means do you? You have noticed that a part of my address is U.S.A.A.C. This stands for United States Army Ambulance Corps. So

we just spell it Usaac and call ourselves usaacs. Pronounced (You-sack) quite often we are invited out to dinner when we go to church on Sundays. I had an invitation last Sunday but was already engaged to dine with my dentist.

In spite of the fact that I am partly a Christian Scientist I have a mighty sore left arm. I was innoculated [sic] this afternoon for paratyphoid fever. After I get all the vaccinations and innoculations [sic] coming to me I guess I'll be immune to most things.

Recently the head of our department of the army, surgeon-general Gorgas visited the camp along with a prominent British official. Things have been speeded up considerably since then. I think they are in a hurry to get us to France or Russia. I hope so. A few days later a high French army official visited the camp. Another soldier in my company and I saw him at a distance so we walked fast and got near enough him to salute. He very graciously returned the salute. I hope these visits are good omens that we shall soon go. *[William Gorgas was Surgeon General and called upon in WWI to assist the French in caring for the wounded. Gorgas, with approval by the Secretary of War, created the United States Ambulance Service. (Army page on USAACS)]*

It is growing dark so I'll close thanking you for your good wishes: Believe me

Yours faithfully

Laddie.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown Pennsylvania, 7 August 1917

August 7, 1917

U.S.A.A.C.

Section 90

Allentown, Pa.

My dear friends,

At last I am back again in Allentown. We have been out in the country hiking around for 10 [?] days so we are glad to get back to our old horse stalls again. I think I shall really enjoy sleeping on the little hard army cots after sleeping on all sorts of ground for so long. Last night we were camped out in a field and my tent happened to be in a small ditch or gully so of course it had to rain and my partner and I had to hunt a bed for the night in a nearby barn. We have done some very strenuous marching and have been very

poorly fed. Last Saturday morning for instance we started marching at 6:30 and marched about 18 miles. Now for breakfast that morning I had a bacon sandwich and for dinner or lunch I had 2 roast beef sandwiches a man can't march too far on such rations so many fell by the way and had to be picked up by the ambulance. I have never missed a hike and neither have I ever fallen out of line.

Before I write further I must reply to one particular portion of your letter which I remember very distinctly. You spoke of making your letters too long and uninteresting. Please do not do so again. You have never been a soldier and can't quite realize that he never gets too many letters and I have never gotten one from you that was in any sense too long. You also wondered if there were not other fellows here who did not get quite so much mail. I think most of them get quite all they deserve so when you feel inclined to write a soldier boy don't look for any other but know that your letters are always very interesting to me and I am surely glad to get them.

I am seated in the Y.M.C.A tent and the letter you wrote to me is in my quarters. It came to me while I was out in the country hence I haven't got it here with me now. I have forgotten whether you asked any further questions or not.

I have taken some other soldier pictures which I think might interest you-when I get them developed I shall send you some. I took a good many out on my hike. Un-fortunately I cannot possibly take my camera with me when I go abroad. I should like so much to do so too.

I am still a little dirty from my march and since I can't jump into the ocean to cool off I guess I had better go over to the shower room and wash up.

Believe me always

Your sincere friend,

Laurence.

Postcard to Harry Chesebro from Laurence Gould: Allentown Pennsylvania, 26 August 1917

August 26, 1917

Allentown, Pennsylvania

Laurence Gould to Harry Chesebro

This is a very familiar occurrence here. I have had nine inoculations [sic]. The man in the picture is being inoculated [sic] for typhoid or paratyphoid fever- I have also had 3 vaccinations for small pox- I ought to be immune pretty soon. Write to me when you can or have your stenographer help. Who is this stenographer?

Laurence



Front side of postcard to Harry features this view of the inoculation tent.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown Pennsylvania, 20 September 1917

Allentown, Pennsa.,

September 20, 1917

My dear Friends,

In order to make an adequate reply to your very interesting letter I must write it on the installment plan. You see we are being worked awfully hard these days. The major wants to harden us up before we go to France. This afternoon we shall march from 1:30 P.M until 5 P.M. in heavy marching equipment. See the enclosed picture and you will know that this is mighty hard work. To-morrow and every working day thereafter we must hike all day long-carrying our lunch in our haversack. I'll take a picture of our blanket roll undone some day so you can see all the things we must carry upon our backs-blankets, clean clothes, toilet articles etc.

I hope you have your house all stained now so can write to me oftener. I always enjoy your letters very much-they tell me so much about the things going on down there in Boca Ratone. I fancy Mrs. Myrick must really feel a little better to know that Mrs. Smith

is really married to some other man than Mr. M. That is one thing I never could quite understand how Mrs. M. could be so devoted to Mr. Myrick considering his treatment of her. I had a letter from Andrew [Myrick] just a few days ago- since they arrived in Pompano -It is the first time I have heard from him during the whole summer. I don't suppose you will see much of them in Boca Ratone. I am a little bit afraid that they did not leave many friends there- Must stop and get ready to hike-

Lau G

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, Undated c. Fall-Winter 1917

Friday Morning....

Just a few lines on to-day's installment before I have to sling my pack and get ready for work.

I did a very unholy thing last night considering the way we have to work. I went down to the Lyric Theater and saw the musical comedy "Have A Heart." I did not get to bed until nearly twelve o'clock so I am a bit tired this morning. We have inspection at 9 o'clock this morning. We have to unroll our packs and display all our clothes etc. Maj. Metcalf will then come along and inspect us. If everything is not just right – if one small tent piece happens to be turned around we are apt to get H__- The Major is very particular and believes in making us work-and work hard. It is no fun to have 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 uniforms buttoned up around the neck. *[The Lyric Theater is a 1,200 seat theater in Allentown, Pennsylvania built around 1896. The Theater is now the symphony hall which is host to the smallest symphony in America. <http://www.allentownpa.gov/Visitors/Historical-Allentown>]*



Photo courtesy Carleton College Library

You tell me that Jack Sistrunk is in the Navy. I do not think he should have gone to war with so many people dependent upon him. I have my doubts about Jeff doing very much work other than with his mouth and Geo. Register is not much better. That man Groves is a crook-a liquor dealer so Mr. Chesebro once told me. [*The Sistrunks were a Boca Raton pioneer family*]

Saturday afternoon 4 o'clock

Now for the last installment for I hope to finish your letter at this sitting. I have been asleep a large part of the afternoon on account of not being obliged to work. This next week I have to work in the kitchen, so I will not have to hike. But it is a mighty unpleasant place to work and I am not sure but what I had rather hike.

Things must be pretty quiet in Boca Ratone with so many people gone. I suppose Palm Beach is a better place for Wireless [?] and Mow [?] to fulfill the social duties such as they had in Winnipeg. I suppose Lew went to Iowa to keep from going to the war. I thought Jewell and Bessant would be married by this time.

The Chesebros sent me a box not long ago and in it were a few mangoes. They arrived here in fine shape and certainly tasted good. I can readily see why you are glad to get some fruit trees planted at home-especially avocados which I learned to like very much before I left the south.

Those pictures of girl ambulance drivers you saw were not drivers here in Allentown. Two of them were the daughters of one of the Major's here and run around in those mannish costumes. But there are no such creatures as women ambulance drivers here. In fact the work at the front is so hard that the physical standards for men is higher here than in most of the other lines of service. The casualties in the British army show that there are more men killed in the Medical Service than in any other branch of the army. It is no woman's job and despite the pictures you see women do not do such things as drive ambulances in France. You asked me about a pair of socks. Indeed I can accept a pair of them and I should be very glad indeed to get them. You are permitted to send anything you wish to the soldiers here-It is only when we get across into foreign service that they place restrictions on what you can send.

I did not know that Mrs. Hunter was in Scotland. It is too bad that she and Mr. Hunter can't get back together again. By the way we have a little Scotchman in our section. He has only been in in this country 4 years. He is a funny little fellow-he says "Roamin' in the Glomin," "Wee Doch and "Doris". (I don't know how to spell these words....) and some other Scotch songs very well. I like him very much. Last Sunday we took a long walk up in the mountains and took some pictures. I'll be sure to send a picture of the two of us. His name is Matthew Jaap.

We have a small phonograph too and have a good many records already. We have “Breakfast In Bed on Sunday Morning” “Ta Ta! My Bonnie Maggie Darlin” and “She’s the Lass For Me” all by Harry Lauder. The last named one is very good. You see there are 45 men in the section and each man agreed to buy a record or help buy one. I chose “Coming Thru the Rye” by Alma Gluck for we have “Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny” by a good quartet. We have a number of Mac Cormack records but we like Caruso better. And if you want to hear a most wonderful record get “My Sunshine” by Caruso. It is a Victor record and is one of the finest we have. We can take the machine and records across with us. [*Harry Lauder was a popular Scottish performer during World War I. He had a comedic routine and also sang classic Scottish songs. His son was killed in the battle of the Somme; Lauder was knighted in 1919.* <http://www.firstworldwar.com/bio/lauder.htm> <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0490743/>]

I believe I told you on my postcard that we are waiting for orders to go to France. We have our extra uniforms and over-coats and are all ready to go. I suppose it will be pretty cool crossing the ocean at this time of the year but I want very much to go.

The nights are getting very cold here. We need all of our blankets etc. to keep warm in these horse stalls. I do not think it would be much colder in France than it is here up in the hills.

Now I have gossiped and written more than you did so I’ll stop trusting that you will write as much next time as you did this.

I may see Harry Lauder in France. Since his son was killed in France he has been preaching and singing to the soldiers there. It seemed to produce a very big change in his life by the death of his only son.

I am always yours faithfully,

Laurence

My section number now 590.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 5 October 1917

Allentown, Pennsa.,

October 5, 1917

My Dear Mrs. Young,

Those fine socks came to me to me Saturday afternoon indeed, I am very glad get them. You see we have been hiking every day and it is mighty hard on one's feet. One needs to wear big shoes and heavy socks to keep his feet from blistering. These socks are just the thing. They will be mighty fine this winter for I am troubled with cold feet. I thank you so much- I never owned a better pair of socks I am quite sure.

Now I imagine your winter residents are beginning to return and fill up or occupy the little chicken coops. I wonder if Dr. Robbins built his wonderful house. No one ever told me whether he did or not. I suppose Kitty still owns the Gorton place. I wish it were my place instead. Just now I can hardly think of anything more pleasant than a swim in the ocean. I feel dirty. You see each man in the section must take his turn at helping in the kitchen. He must work there a week. This is my week. 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 of wiping dishes. You know it is a good deal of work to keep this mess hall clean. It is the largest mess hall in any military camp in the world. About 3000 [to 4000 crossed out] men eat at one time there. *[Dr. Stanley Robbins was an early snowbird to the Boca Raton area. Robbins did complete his house which was located on A1A not far south of Palmetto Park Road. The house no longer exists.]*

I'll not write more this time for I can hardly think of anything to write. I am sending a picture which may interest you.

Again I thank you very much for the socks. They are mighty fine.

I am

Always just,

Laurence.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 30 October 1917

Allentown, Penns.,

October 30, 1917

My dear friends,

Had it not rained so hard this morning 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. It is mighty cold sleeping out of doors in pup tents at this time of year. On Tuesday night a heavy wind and rain storm came up and blew our tents down. The rain was icy cold and our

blankets and clothing were soaked. We nearly froze. The wind blew down our cook tent too and we had to march eight miles with soaking feet and clothing and no breakfast but some bitter coffee that I couldn't drink. Several boys are now in the hospital with pneumonia as a result of exposure sustained on this hike. We were very glad to get back to Allentown and our horse stalls seemed pretty good and then along came orders that we were going out again to-day on a hike lasting indefinitely-perhaps until the first of December. It rained hard this morning and has now turned cold and since the roads are so muddy we shall not leave until tomorrow.

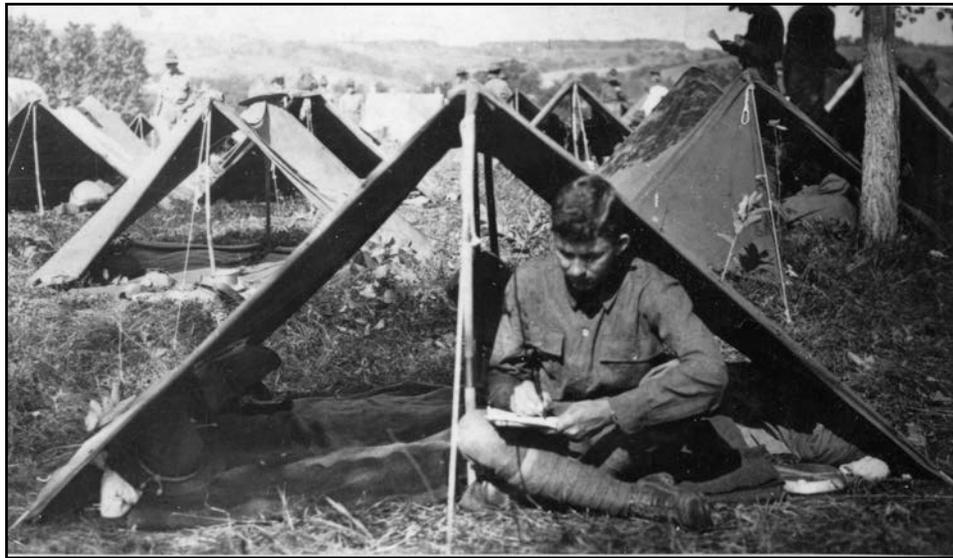


Photo courtesy Carleton College Library

Last night I had the treat of my life- I listened to Harry Lauder. I paid \$1.50 to hear him at the Lyric Theatre and then he came out to the camp at 11 o'clock last night, just to talk to us soldiers. I am sending you his program which he rendered last night. He sang more new songs than his old ones and his new songs were certainly great. The one "We A'go Home the Same Way" is especially good. I am going to see if I cannot get a copy of it for you. He sang a number of funny songs first. His song "I am going to marry 'Arry on the Fifth of Jan-u-ary" is very funny indeed. But he is more serious than he used to be. "The Lads Who Fought and Won" is quite serious and very good. He told us about the war and how he had lost his only son there. The loss of his son seems to have produced a profound change in his life. He has been in France preaching and singing to the soldiers in the trenches until he came to America. This is his farewell tour. He is now trying to raise £5,000,000 to take care of the disabled Scotch soldiers. Some are in the audience called for "Wee Hoose Many The Heather." "Ah! My friend" said he, "That is not a song

now-that is hymn. The last time I sang that I was in France behind the lines near Arras. I sang it to 15,000 Scotch Highlanders. A few days before there had been 20,000 of them. They had gone into battle and 5,000 had not come back. Every one of them had some one waiting for him in a wee hoose some where in Scotland.” Then I wish [I could crossed out] you could have heard him sing. He put so much feeling into the song. I shall not soon forget. You would have enjoyed the Scottish Highlanders Band. They came out here to camp and rendered several old time favorite songs to the great joy of the soldiers. They surely made a hit with us as they played “Keep The Home Fires Burning,” “Yankee Doodle,” “Marching Through Georgia,” “Tipperary” “The Campbells are Coming” and several others.

I received your card telling me that you are knitting another pair of socks. Indeed I shall be very glad to get another pair of socks like you can make. My feet are cold now. You see my mother is troubled so much with rheumatism in her hands that she cannot knit for me. Most of the fellows have mothers who are knitting for them. So I am not at all selfish when I say that I need such things more than some other fellows. If we sleep out in pup tents very much longer I shall need something to keep my feet warm. I was very glad to get the picture of your house. Indeed your house must make quite a contrast to the little chicken coops around it. I should like very much to see it. I suppose you have a number of winter neighbors now. I wish I might be one of them too for a while. I would enjoy the fish and other good things that one can get only there.

I have heard quite a good deal about the Allens from Mr. Chesebro. He knows them well. I understand that Mr. Allen is not very trustworthy. You speak about Boca Ratone being void of people whom you can make real friends of. I found it so- almost. I was there two years- and I can count upon but two families that have remained real friends to me. You are of course one of them. I thought of you last night as I listened to Harry Lauder and wished so much that you might listen to him and to the Highlanders Band. And if I ever do get across into the trenches-I shall think of you often there and will remember you as often as I am permitted to do so.

I have not heard from the Chesebros for some time. I suppose they are pretty busy with their farm now. Every one tells me that Mrs. Chesebro is failing. Esther tells me that she is getting very childish. I suppose she is having a good time with her goats. Mr. Chesebro told me in his last letter that the goats had “swarmed” I thought I would have some pictures for you this morning but I haven’t gotten them back from the photographer yet. I’ll send them to you later-until then I am

Yours as B-4,

Laurence.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 28 November 1917

Allentown Pennsa.,

November 28, 1917.

My dear Mrs. Young,

Yesterday when the mail came I found a package from "Mrs. W.C. Young, Boca Ratone, Fla." I knew at once that it was something fine. I was not disappointed. I don't know how to thank you for the socks. They are such handy things, especially while 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. You very thoughtfully sent some yarn to darn them up but I do not think I'll need it. I am beginning to believe that the little poem you sent me with the first pair of socks is quite true for there is not a sign of a hole in either one of them and I have worn them a great deal too. I could with Bill's permission, give you a great big hug for such a gift.

Tomorrow will be Thanksgiving and I can surely be thankful in having such friends as you. It makes it so much easier to know that "They miss me at home" and Boca Ratone will be always half home so long as you people are there. I suppose all your winter guests are in town by now. I hope the war is not affecting your trade at all. I wonder how the new store is getting on. They are still running are they not?

Some way I can't seem to think of much to write. I just wanted to thank you for the socks. I am going to send you a picture of our dug-out as soon as I can get some finished. I just wish you could see our bunks and our rock fire place plastered up with clay mud. It smokes a little some times but it keeps us pretty warm and that is the most important consideration.

Last Sunday afternoon the house was packed with visitors the whole afternoon. I wanted to come to Allentown but couldn't change my clothes until 5:30 as there was some one in my "bud war" [boudoir] all the time.

The mitts Mrs. Muhle sent me are mighty fine. I have worn them just about every day since I got them.

Some days ago I had a letter from Mr. Race telling me about Boca Ratone affairs. He told me about fishing with Harley. I often wonder if he will ever wake up to find out how Gates "dupes" him. Perhaps he is too good-hearted to find out. I do not know. I have not heard from father for a long time. I guess he keeps busy with his farm. I hope he can make lots of money this year. [*George Race moved to Boca Ratone about 1914 with his*

wife Nellie. In 1917 he purchased the houses known as *Singing Pines* from the Myricks. Pioneer realtor Harley Gates first arrived ca. 1914.]

Now if I want to catch the next car out to our “dug-out” camp I must stop writing and go.

I thank you again and yet again for the fine pair of socks and beg you to believe me.

Always Just,

Laurence.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 15 December 1917

U.S.N Training Station

December 15, 1917

Dear Mrs. Young:

I have just received a package from you containing a pair of socks They are sure nice-and warm. You don't know much I appreciate them more so because you made them yourself. They are just what a fellow needs in this place the earth has been snow covered for the last week First it rains and then it snows, Very much different [*Letter ends here, seems pages may be missing.*]

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 22 December 1917

Allentown, Pennsa.,

December 22, 1917.

My dear friends,

I am not feeling so well today as I ought. I am suffering from the “grip.” 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.

Some of the boys have gone home to spend Christmas but some also had to remain in camp. I have already had five invitations out to Christmas dinners and I am going out to a turkey dinner at our big brothers house tonight.

The weather has been unpleasantly cold here for some time- making me wish again that my training camp were in Florida. Tomorrow will be Sunday and I am supposed to work all day but I am going try to get out of it until I get well again.

It has been so long since I have heard from any Boca Ratone people that I have quite gotten out of touch with things there. It has been weeks since I have heard from any of the Chesebros. I trust they are very much alive and simply too busy on the farm to do much writing. I am going to enclose some pictures that may interest you and since I am not in very good spirits to write I shall close my letter wishing for every one of you the best Christmas and the happiest New Year that you have had for many a day.

Yours sincere friend,

Laurence

P.S. my name now in the army has come to be "Larry."

LauG

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 3 January 1918

Allentown, Pennsa.

January 3, 1918

My dear friends,

I trust you have all enjoyed a very happy holiday season. I certainly did considering the distance I was from home and close friends.

I am in the camp Y.M.C.A. as I write this and the helmet that you sent me Mrs. Young is on my head. I have worn it every day since I received it. The weather has been unusually cold here for more than two weeks. A man told me that they had had the coldest weather in 37 years. The thermometer has been way below zero at times and it still continues in the neighborhood of zero. We have no drilling now but we are supposed to have studies in French and in the mechanics of the Ford. Yesterday morning we were told to prepare at once to go to France or Italy-we do not know which place. We began packing up and if nothing had happened we should have left Allentown tonight at midnight. But of course something had to happen. A man came down with measles in the afternoon and one with the scarlet fever. Neither man was in our section but both were in the same building with us and in the same battalion so the whole building and our whole battalion was placed in quarantine and we cannot leave the camp-we cannot enter any other barracks. We do not

know how long we shall be quarantined but we know that we cannot go over tonight with our regular contingent under Major Metcalf. We may be delayed for weeks and perhaps months yet before we go. It is very disappointing to get ready and have to unpack again. We ought to be used to it however for we have been in an overseas contingent since last September-already to go at any time. Some of the Ambulance Sections are going to Italy and we may go there when we go any place.

Just a few days ago I received a letter from my only brother telling me that there is now a second Laurence M. Gould. He was born about Christmas time I understand. Poor chap I hope he weathers the perils of being named after a fellow like me, with safety.

Not long ago I had a short letter from Jack Sistrunk. He sent me his picture and said "Here is the picture of a real sailor."

I suppose things go along about as usual with you. I fancy no war could stop Kitty's vast real estate dealings or could stop Aunt Annie's nagging. How are Myrtle Lee and Ivy? Do both of them go to school? Do you ever see anything of your Pompano friends [Myricks]. Now will you please thank Miss Muhle for her Christmas greetings and will you accept my hearty thanks for the very fine helmet and Christmas greeting which you yourself sent me. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate all the good things you have done for me. Some day I may get to France and do my bit for the U.S. and for the Scotchmen too and thus show my appreciation. [*Aunt Annie was a local term used for Ann Raulerson who was married to Burt Raulerson, and they had two daughters Myrtle and Ivy.*]

Always just,

Laurence

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 3 March 1918

Camp Crane,

Allentown, Pennsa.,

March 3, 1918

My dear friends,

-And especially you Mrs. Young for you wrote me the splendid and interesting letter. I am always so glad to get the news from Boca Ratone and you certainly give it to me in an

unusually interesting manner. I had a letter from father a few days ago and he told me about Raulerson putting the fish in his shirt pocket- quite an interesting fish story.

I am very glad that your competitors have not yet run you out of business. I expect to buy my supplies of you when I establish my winter home in Boca Ratone.

Spring is coming now. Most of the snow has melted now and the roads are very muddy but that does not prevent us from hiking.

It seems that at last there is some assurance that we are going to leave Allentown. Our battalion commander assures us that we are going to Italy. An Italy General is coming to review us sometime soon and we are drilling in full field equipment daily in order to make a good impression on him. Thirty ambulance sections are going to Italy and this Italian government is to furnish transportation for us not later than April 7th. I would much rather go to France than to Italy but I should be glad to go even to the central part of Africa to get busy at some active work.

I have put my application in to be called for examination for a commission. I feel that I can pass my examination all right if I can only get called up. But hundreds of men put in their applications and are never called for examination. However I have a bit of "pull" that may get me ahead. A Lieutenant colonel on the staff of Surgeon General Gorgas will probably write a letter for me. If I am not called for examination pretty soon I am going to try mighty hard to get into some combatant branch of the service. It is the height of my ambition now to get into a machine gun company. It is almost impossible to transfer from this service however. But I have become so barbarous that I want to shoot the Huns up. I don't think I shall be satisfied to cart the wounded men around now. I want to wound the men or better still kill them. I think I would really enjoy running a bayonet through a Hun now, after hearing so much about their practices.

Well I cannot think of much to write. You see we are still under quarantine and cannot get out. I have some pictures down town that I want to send you but I have been unable as yet to go down to the photographer.

There is really no use in keeping us in quarantine any longer. I am glad you are doing so much Red Cross work. I am sure you will enjoy it.

Now I must stop for want of more to write.

Yours faithfully,

Laurence.

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 24 March 1918

Camp Crane, Allentown, Pennsylvania,

March 24, 1918

My dear friends of the "Wee Hoose",

You see I am not returning any of the pictures which you sent me. Indeed I was very glad to get them. They make me really homesick-that is Florida homesick. Outside of the good friends that I made down there I miss the ocean perhaps more than anything else. I notice in the one little picture that Bill's hair is thriving about as rapidly as usual.

I was very glad indeed to get the papers that you sent. I did not only read about the death of Mr. Metcalf but I read about everything else in the papers. It seemed so good just to read about Florida.

I think I am going to be able to transfer out of the Medical Department into the heavy artillery. I have put in my application to transfer to a battery of motor drawn 6 inch guns and as soon as some replacement troops arrive in camp the Colonel states that my transfer will go through. There is no other branch of the service that offers such good opportunities to the college man as the heavy artillery. I shall be very glad to get into it. It may be a few weeks yet before my transfer will go through because it always takes anything a long time to get through "military channels." But I feel sure that I am eventually going to get there, and I shall not be satisfied until I do get into some branch of the service where I can shoot up the Huns. I have become rather barbarous in my temperament-I want to kill the Huns. If I should fail to get into this battery of heavy artillery I have a good chance of getting into a machine gun company-that would be a very interesting service too.

I suppose some will counsel me to remain here in this service for I have recently been promoted to the rank of Sergeant and when I transfer I shall be reduced to a private again and will have to work my way up again. But I shall be glad to do so.

To-day is one of the finest spring days that we have yet had here. It, being Palm Sunday I attended the Episcopal Church for I always enjoy the services in the Episcopal Church at this time of the year. They gave me a little spray of palm and it again reminded me of the place where the palms grow.

I do hope you will pardon me for writing to you on the typewriter but you see I am now in charge of all the paper work connected with the section and this week I must see to making out the pay roll. That is a big task for four copies of it must be made. Now you

see I want to get as much practice on the typewriter as possible and since I was going to write to you anyhow this afternoon I decided to do so on the typewriter.

Again I thank you very much indeed for the pictures. I always enjoy pictures and especially those fo[sic] people whom I know so well.

I am always—just,

Your Laddie.



*Photo courtesy Carleton College
Library*

Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Italy, 10 July 1918

With the Italian Army

July 10, 1918

Dear Mrs. Young,

[The Battle of the Piave River occurred from June 15-22, 1918. Gould might have participated in this battle. This battle was significant because the Austro-Hungarian army lost around 40,000 men, and sealed the fate of the fledgling Austro-Hungarian army. <http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/piaveriver.htm>]

Yesterday I made a trip into the city—one of the oldest cities in Europe [Genoa]. There are no records showing how old it is. Tradition says it was founded by the sons of Noah right

after the Deluge. It is a place of great interest to us Americans-here one finds the remains of the house in which Christopher Columbus was born. Yesterday I visited the cathedral of Saint Laurence. In this great building one finds the tomb of John the Baptist brought here from Jerusalem in the time of the Crusades. Also there is an emerald cup here which is said to have belonged to Solomon and from which Christ is said to have drunk at the last supper. One finds all these interesting relics in addition to the great beauty and interest of the building itself.

They have here in this city also the richest cemetery in the world-I have been thru it twice and here I have seen the most wonderful examples of sculpture I ever saw any place.

I could rave on indefinitely telling you of the interesting buildings, forts etc[sic] around here but I want to write you just a word about the people and the way in which they have received us here.

I carried the Italian flag as we marched from the boat to our temporary quarters and such a welcome!-as the people saw their flag approaching along beside the American flag they began to press out into the street to touch and kiss the flags-many time barring our progress-many of them were weeping and it was really a most touching welcome. Again on the Fourth of July they entered so whole-heartedly into the celebration of our great holiday that one would have thought they were celebrating a holiday of their own. How they cheered us and threw flowers at us until it seemed as though we were marching thru a flower bed-from thousands of throats all along the way were greeted with "Viva L' America"! "Viva L' America"!

This kindly feeling of the Italians makes us mighty glad that we are here even though we were so slow in getting here.

Our camp at present is just a little way from the coast of the Mediterranean sea so it seems quite like old times to get into the sea again. I certainly enjoy it immensely. I find the climate here quite similar to that of your place at this season of the year except that it is somewhat cooler here. One sees a few palm trees but not so many as where you are. I suppose in southern Italy the climate and vegetation would be quite like southern Florida. But here there are mountains which adds greatly to the scenic effects.

Please write to me frequently and believe me

Always just

Laddie.

Postcard to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: France, Undated: c. August-September 1918

Mrs. W.C. Young

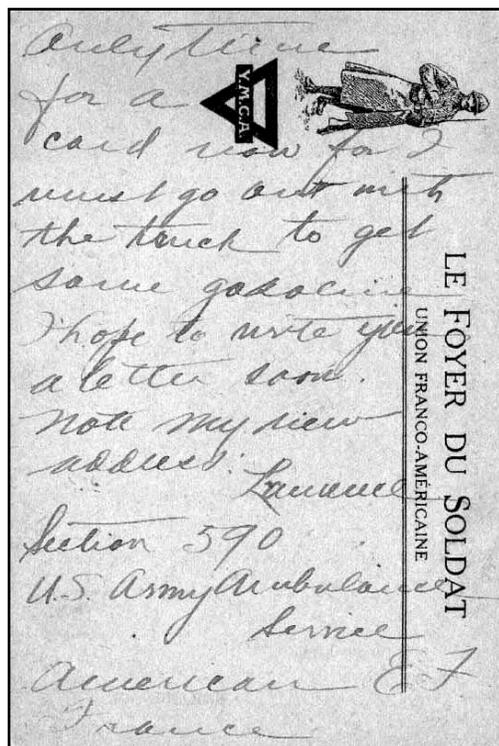
Boca Ratone, Florida

U.S. America

Only time for a card now for I must go out with the truck to get some gasoline. I hope to write you a letter soon note my new address.

Laurence

Section 590 U.S. Ambulance Service ,American E.F. France



Postcard to Peg from France ca. summer 1918

Letter to Bill and Peg Young from Laurence Gould: France, 16 September 1918

[Gould was part of the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.). September marked a major turning point for the Allied campaign and the A.E.F. The A.E.F. won a major battle on September 18, 1918 at Epehy. These victories gave confidence to the Allies to attack the main German lines.] <http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/havrincourt.htm>

September 16, 1918

Somewhere in France

Dear Bill and Peggie,

For nearly a month now we have been moving about here and there in this section of France. On account of being always on the move I have very scandalously neglected my correspondence and yet conditions have been anything but ideal for letter writing. Sometimes for days at a time we see no sun and all around us mud, mud, mud but o joy! When the sun does shine again we promptly forget there ever was any mud even though we may be walking in it up to our ankles, for when the sun does shine here it is indeed "sunny" France for everything seems sunny-one just can't feel "grouchy."

From what I have just written you know that I love France and yet down in Italy when they told us that we were to come up here I was sorry. Over in America I always wanted to come here to France-I was prejudiced against Italy but my prejudice soon wore away after I landed there and much as I love this land and its people I must still say that I prefer Italy. There is something in the very atmosphere or spirit of Italy that appeals to me much more than anything I have experienced here-and yet I saw only a small part of Italy-some day I hope to return and revel in the glories of Florence, Venice, Milan, Rome and the other portions of Italy that I did not see while there. I was in a part of the land which has played a tremendously import part in the history of Europe.

But just now I would not for anything return to Italy. It is great to be up here where the big things are going on. You are reading good news in the papers these days. In fact I can now see the point of view of that man who said "This is the best day the world has ever seen-to-morrow will be a better." And it is so; greater things are to happen over here than you have yet read about. ["Not until I" crossed out]

Your letter was most welcome. You always write the most newsy letters. It is almost as good as visiting Boca Ratone again-which I hope some day to do.

Right now I envy you the ocean. I miss the swims I used to have in the Mediterranean-up here water is at a premium; it is often hard to get enough to drink. This afternoon I took a bath in a muddy little stream grown full of bull rushes. I stepped in the water and sank into the mud clear up to my knee.

I had a letter from Father Chesebro shortly before I left Italy but he said nothing about them going up to Michigan. I suppose they are back now. I have not heard from either the Rockwells or the Myricks since I came here. I seldom hear from any of the Myricks anyway.

I was sorry to read your news about Hatty Long. It seems an awful narrow view to take of life to want to shut oneself up as she must do. The same day as your letter came to me (yesterday) I also received a letter from "Billy" Majewoki [?]-the first one I have had in about a year I think. I wonder if she is as full of life as usual-I hope so!

I am sorry that is growing dark and I must stop. I would write more in the morning but perhaps we shall move before then. I would also write and tell how much your letters mean to me. Please do write as often as you can for it always makes my heart glad to see an envelope with your familiar hand writing upon it.

Some day I am coming down to hear all those new records you have and to swim again with you in the ocean. I often permit myself to dream of that time and hope that it may not be far away.

Always just

Laddie

Address

Section 590

U.S. Army Ambulance Service

305th Sanitary Train

A.P.O. 756

A.E.F France

Censored by W.H. Woolverton 1st Lt. A.A.S

*Photo courtesy Carleton College
Library*



Letter to Peg Young from Laurence Gould: Koblenz, Germany, 27 December 1918

[Section 590 became part of the occupation force after the war stationed in Koblenz, Germany. Section 590 was relieved in April 1919, and came back aboard the Koningen der Nederlander which landed in Newport News, Virginia. See. USAACs website]

Coblenz, Germany [Koblenz]

27 December, 1918.

My dear Peg and Bill,

I guess it is high time that I again write you a little news of myself. You may be surprised to hear from me way up here in Germany-but here I am anyhow.

We thought when the armistice was signed that we should be sent back to Italy-but not so we were attached to the Army of Occupation and came up to Germany. And do you know of all the ambulance Sections in the American E.F. Section 590 is the only one to come clear up to the Rhine.

This is a great country—scenically. I just wish you and Bill with your appreciation of the beautiful could have driven down the valley with me a few days ago. On either side of the river the banks rise so high as to be almost mountains-all the way up they are terraced to support the grape vines. Now and then on some particularly rugged cliff one beheld one of those famous old castles around which so much of the romance of the middle ages is woven. It is truly a wonderful country-this Rhine valley. I wish we could say as much for these pigs of Germans.

We were stationed a few days in Trier or Treves. It lies down in the valley of the Moselle. It is especially interesting for it is an old Roman city and many of the old Roman ruins are still to be seen- and even in their ruin these old amphitheatres and castles make the German architecture look hideous by comparison-for there is a splendor or grandeur in their massive construction that one does not find in the German buildings. Bill would enjoy all the Rhine wine, good beer, etc. that they have here!

I suppose your Christmas was a merry one. This year I just had to skip Christmas –for me the day was just the twenty-fifth of December. Some of the fellows got “liquored up” to such an extent that they made a good show for the rest of us! I was not one of them of course.

At this time of the year- and especially since the war is to all essentials over- we think especially of home and friends-and just now this army of occupation is a home sick army. I have no idea as to when we shall be sent home. We still think that we shall first be sent

to Italy. I hope so for of all the places I have been that seems quite the best to me- and I say this after having been in France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Alsace Lorraine, and Germany. There is an indefinable something in the atmosphere of Italy that sure casts a spell over me.

I trust that you are both well and that Boca Ratone society moves along in its accustomed channels. I should certainly like to get back there for a time- I am looking forward toward doing it too!

Write to me for I am not coming home soon.

Faithfully,

Laurence

Address

Section 590

U.S. Army Ambulance Service

American E.F.

France

[stamp says; Censored by: 1st Lt. WM. H. Woolverton U.S.A.A.S]

Letter to Frank Chesebro from Laurence Gould: Newport News, Virginia, 3 May 1919

May 3, 1919

Newport News Virginia

Laurence Gould to Frank Chesebro

Just arrived in the U.S. after rather a stormy voyage of 12 days. Don't know where we shall be discharged as yet.

Laurence

*Front of the postcard sent
to Frank Chesebro May
1919.*





Map showing the range of Gould's WWI travels courtesy Richard Randall

Many sides of Laurence can be seen throughout these letters. We see his philosophical side, caring side, and his temperamental side. Laurence takes us on a journey through the WWI era. The anti-German sentiment throughout the war can be seen through his quoting of Billy Sunday about all of Hell was made in Germany, and over time Laurence's desire to go into artillery to specifically kill German soldiers. Laurence also introduces the reader to the pop culture of the day. Singers like Harry Lauder and Alva Gluck were some of the most popular entertainers of their time. The most revealing parts of the letters are of Boca Raton in the 1910s. Boca Raton (Ratone as the pioneers would spell it) was still a small farming community. The challenges of living in such a community can be seen through Laurence's letters. We see tensions between the Chesebros and Myricks, and how it was hard for Peg and Bill Young to fit into the community. Even Laurence, who was a beloved school teacher, encountered a kind of stigma throughout the community when he states he can only trust but two families. This is not to say Boca Raton was a bad town and the people hated each other, but like in many small towns rumors and scandal are easy to come by and are fast spreading. Allegations of Mr. Myrick having an affair with a Mrs. Smith and other community problems are seen through these writings. Through these letters we also find an acceptance through the community when Peg Young and others send Gould socks and other items he needed to survive camp life.

Laurence's growth into a man can be seen through his writings and experiences in the war; the long hikes in brutal weather and going through the toughest training in the armed forces. The experience he gained during the war would benefit him later in his life. In 1928 Gould accompanied Admiral Richard Byrd's first Antarctic Expedition as second in command. During this expedition Gould was stranded in the Maude Mountains, and Byrd made a daring rescue of

Gould and his men. Laurence's survival tactics that he learned in the army surely came in handy during this trial of the Antarctic cold.

Gould also served from 1945 to 1962 as the first president of Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, helping build it into a major liberal arts institution.

Gould never forgot his friends in Boca Raton, Florida. He donated many fine photographs taken during his time here in 1914-1916; one of the most important collections held by the BRHS&M. He corresponded with the Society until his death in 1995, and assisted author Geoffrey Lynfield in completing Spanish River Paper Vol XI no. 3, a volume dedicated to Gould and his career.

Polar explorer Laurence Gould



[Inscription in a copy of Gould's book *Cold*, given to the BRHS&M in 1984]:

“Two of the happiest and most productive years in my education were those I spent teaching school in Boca Raton, Florida 1914-1916. I gladly give this book for your library as a token of my fond memories of those years

Laurence M. Gould 15 October 1984

