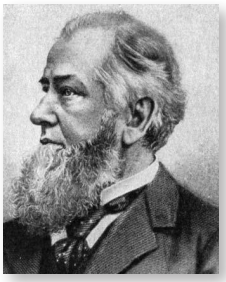
Agnes Goodyear & William Gould

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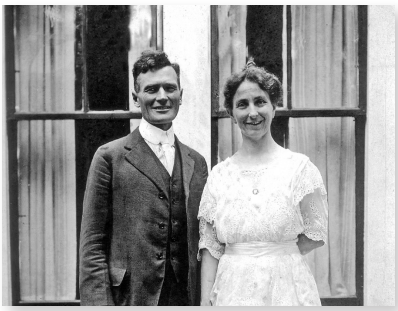
Gould Farm

by Lori Hahn



Charles Goodyear Jr.

Successful inventor Charles Goodyear, Jr., was the son of the man who discovered the process of vulcanizing rubber, Charles Goodyear. Charles Jr. married Mary Henrietta Colt, a descendant of the storied Tuttle family. They had seven children including the three women who would be the driving forces behind a major social experiment called Gould Farm. A number of family members assisted in this endeavor, but we'll focus on the three most involved for the purposes of this story.



William J. Gould & Agnes Goodyear

William was the son of a minister and farmer. His father died while he was a teen and he took on the family debt and paid it all off. As a small farmer, his opportunities didn't look great. Though expected to follow his father into the ministry, he did not complete his education to do so.

He then met Agnes and he counts that connection the one that changed not only his life, but that of thousands of people in need. Agnes Goodyear married William J. Gould.

Agnes Gould was educated by tutors and studied in Europe. She could have married a man of much greater social influence and wealth, but married hardworking, funny Will.

Will and Agnes had a shared, deep interest in social work and helping those less well off or in need. Along with the couple, Agnes' sister Caroline Goodyear and first cousin J. Eleanor Goodyear, daughter of William Henry Goodyear, art curator, would actively work in this venture during their lifetimes.

Long before the Gould Farm was started in Monterey, Massachusetts in the Berkshire Hills in 1913. This attempt at starting the farm would be there sixth. This time, the place, the time, and the team made a difference and they succeeded. In the autumn of 1913, the Goulds purchased an initial 105-acre plot of for $5,000. It was the first project of its kind in the U.S. The property was an older, established farm dating back to around 1800.



The original farmhouse

When they started, their mission was to assist people with all varieties of physical and developmental disabilities, alongside individuals facing situational poverty, recent immigrants, and shell-shocked soldiers. As the mission evolved, they focused primarily on the mentally ill. Patients were treated through community living, a structured work program, and clinical care to help them move toward recovery and independence.

The work of the Goodyear women work was heavily inspired by early mental health advocates like Dorothea Dix and the broader American settlement house movement, which emphasized immersive community living.

The original farmhouse was a ramshackle, barn-like structure that completely lacked modern plumbing, heating, or lighting when they bought it. The couple and their veryfirst "guests" spent the early years manually repairing the property to make it habitable. The farm would eventually become over 700 acres.

In 1925, a forest fire threatened the main house and several residents attempted to fight the fire. Sadly, William Gould died in the fire. His wife, a driving force herself, continued the operation of farm with her first cousin, Caroline, who had been with them since the beginning. Her sister J. Eleanor Goodyear, who had provided financial assistance to the farm, also become more involved in the farm. The work would continue with a group called William Gould Associates and included his wife and others including her sister and cousin. They carried on with William's legacy of kindness.

Eventually, they could serve up to 100 people. In 1934, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., provided enough money to build a

new dormitory.


Caroline Goodyear

In its 23rd year, it was described in the local paper as: “Gould Farm opens its doors to those from every walk of life, every land, race, and creed who need what the farm has to offer.”

The environment was that of a family home with comfortable chairs and sofas, a radio to listen to, bible reading, and the pleasure of each other’s company. Patients whould recover, build their strength, learn to work and associate with others who were passing on life skills to give them the ability to thrive away from the farm. At this time, there were no doctors or medicines. There was just an understanding and guidance. Many who arrived too late in life to go back into the world would not die without
knowing there was someone with them who cared at their final moments. It was anything but an institution. The farm served over 6,000 people by its 23rd year.

Within a few years, the social services agencies and charged minimally, $3-4 per week depending on the level of service. There was joy and laughter in the way the farm operated.

Time would slowly evolve the farm. By 1948, despite not being a mental health facility with mental health staff, the boarders were often there for mental health reasons. Fees had increased to $30 per week for those who could pay, but no one was turned away for lack of funds. No one had to leave until they were ready. Those who needed to stay built small cottages on the property (of which there ended up being 21) so they had security for life.

In 1956, they raised funds to replace the original building.It would include sleeping room for 57, an increase of 25. And, it would include a large dining to seat 125, an increase of 30. The front part of the old building would be retained for business offices.

The next year, the heart of the operation, Agnes Goodyear Gould, died. Her sister and cousin remained to continue on. Activities at the farm included: raising chickens, farming, non-denominational relgious servies, arts and crafts, and folk dancing. The staff included 20 employees.

A study was completed in the late 1950s by Henrik Infield, the noted socialologt, in which he determined that the farm was the most successful of its kind and answered important questions in psychiatry. Its model of communal family living for individual healing serves as a model for future intentional community projects worldwide.

Since its inception, the profile of the average visitor changed from 65 years old to 45. The average stay in 1963

Gould Farm continues to operate generally as it did when it opened in 1913. Now exclusively serving the mentally ill, the farm offers both clinical and transition support. The farm now includes a roadside store and cafe, operated by guests. The Gould-Goodyear families built an enduring legacy affecting over 15,000 people in need.