

**Oral Memoirs**  
**of**  
**Dillard Alan Gould**

An Interview Conducted by

Dr. Connie Lester

August 2, 2022

Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences, and Stories  
(RICHES)

*University of Central Florida RICHES*

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## **Interview Histories**

Interviewers: Dr. Connie Lester

Transcriber: Noah Schramm

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the RICHES Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

## **Project Detail**

RICHES is an umbrella program housing interdisciplinary public history projects that bring together different departments at UCF with profit and non-profit sectors of the community.

Central Florida has often been associated with large-scale, commercial tourism and housing development. While those aspects of Central Florida are important to the economic growth of the region, much of its history has remained unnoticed and under researched. The Public History program at UCF links many projects under one initiative to promote the collection and preservation of Central Florida history. By facilitating research that records and presents the stories of communities, businesses, and institutions in Central Florida, RICHES seeks to provide the region with a deeper sense of its heritage. At the same time, the initiative connects the UCF students and faculty with the community and creates a foundation on which Central Floridians can build a better sense of their history.

## **Legal Status**

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Dillard Gould is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on August 2, 2022.

## **Abstract**

An oral history interview of educator Dillard A. Gould. The interview was conducted by Dr. Connie Lester over Zoom on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Some of the topics include his early life and education in Oviedo and playing sports, his military service, experiencing discrimination in the United States Army, and being stationed in Germany, working for AT&T, and his thoughts on African American advancement and the Oviedo Colored School Museum.

# Dillard A. Gould

Oral History Memoir

Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Dr. Connie Lester

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

Zoom

0:00:00

## His early life and education in Oviedo and playing sports

**Lester** Today is August the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. I am Connie Lester. With me is Jessica Oldham, and Dillard Alvin Gould. We are conducting this oral history via Zoom. Mr. Gould, welcome to the oral history. Would you please state your name and tell us a little bit about where you're from, and what it was like growing up?

**Gould** Okay. My name is Dillard Alvin Gould. That's my given name, but I was under a different name until I was – went through the service. My mom didn't like the name I was given so she – she put the name she wanted on my birth certificate. And, uh, I didn't know about that until I went in the service when I was 17. You need my, uh, original name?

**Lester** If you want to give it to us, yes.

**Gould** My original name was Aloie Tossie. A-L-O-I-E. Tossie. My mom didn't like that name...

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** ...but it was given to me by my aunt. And, uh, she never changed it. She just put what she wanted on my birth certificate, which was my great-grandfather's name. His name was Dillard Gould.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** So, I was surprised when I got to the service and I gave my birth certificate, that it was different. So, I went through school with that name. And when I tried to, uh, get my school records when I was in New Jersey, I – they had a hard time finding them. Yeah.

**Lester** So what was your childhood like? What was – what was it like growing up in Oviedo?

**Gould** Growing up in Oviedo was, uh – well, it wasn't easy.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** I had a — Well, first of all I didn't start school at, uh, six years old like most kids did. I started at five [*audio glitch*]. And that was a problem for me for a while because I think I was too [*audio glitch*] young to be there.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** But my mom insisted that I go because I knew a lot of stuff. Apparently, I didn't know enough, and later years it caught up with me. I didn't get past the eighth grade. But eventually, I, uh, finished school with a GED<sup>1</sup>. And I passed it the first time around [*doors closes*]. Which was, uh, because there's not much about my childhood to, uh [*clears throat*] — nothing, uh, dramatic about it or anything. I was just a kid that was always hungry. My mom worked every day and my dad wasn't around.

**Lester** What kind of work did your mother do?

**Gould** She was a farm worker.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** After that she went to work for Henry Walker[?]....

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** ...on Lake Charm in Oviedo. She worked for them for 37 years [*clears throat*].

**Lester** Did you have brothers and sisters?

**Gould** I had two brothers and three sisters. I don't know how in the world my mom, uh...

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** ...took care of all of us, but she did. She was a good woman.

**Lester** It sounds like it. Were — were you the oldest or kind of in the middle?

**Gould** No, I was the third.

**Lester** You were the third. Okay.

**Gould** Mhmm. No, wait a minute. I had two brothers and a sister before me. That'd make me fourth.

**Lester** Mhmm.

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<sup>1</sup> General Educational Development

**Gould** And two sisters after me. Yeah.

**Lester** Do you remember what kinds of games you played as a kid? Um...

**Gould** Oh, we loved baseball. And I played basketball. Um, *[clears throat]* baseball was my favorite game.

**Lester** What position did you play?

**Gould** Well, I was a center fielder.

**Lester** Were these baseball games in the neighborhood, or did you play at school?

**Gould** Both. Neighborhood and at school.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** I probably could have been a professional but that wasn't allowed back in my day.

**0:05:58** **His military service, experiencing discrimination in the United States Army, and being stationed in Germany**

**Lester** So, um, you were an adult, uh, y – you – a – as a child, uh, integration hadn't come, and the Civil Rights Movement hadn't come. So, you experienced integration as an adult, um, I'm assuming, when you went into the army. Can you tell me what that was like?

**Gould** Well, at first it was, uh, okay. I was the first one in my group to get a promotion. But after that, uh, I was, uh, sent to Germany. And the First Sergeant there didn't like me at all. He was from Mississippi.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** And he said as long as he was there I would *[audio glitch]* never get any place. And he was a lifer. He was going to be there forever, so, he was right. I never got any place. My, uh, *[unintelligible]* leader, the lieutenant, he put me in for promotions maybe four or five times. They never got passed for *[unintelligible]*. It wasn't easy. But I had plans to stay in there for twenty years or so. But, as it was, I got out after three years. A lot of time *[sic]* I think I should have stayed in, but I couldn't take what was going on.

**Lester** Did you have a chance to travel around in Germany when you were there?

**Gould** Oh yes. It was a beautiful country.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** I went to Munich. Lots of places.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** I was in Augsburg stationed.

**Lester** Okay.

**Gould** Mm. I—I didn't want to come home. I knew how it was back there, so...

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** But in Germany I had freedom I had never felt before.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**0:08:13 Working for AT&T**

**Lester** So, when you got out of the service, what kind of work did you do?

**Gould** Well, [*sighs*] first I went to s—went to school. I got my GED. Then I went to school. Uh, electronics school.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** And I got a job with AT&T<sup>2</sup>. And I retired [*audio glitch*] for them.

**Lester** Was it difficult to get a job with AT&T? Were they open, uh, to...

**Gould** No, not at first.

**Lester** Okay.

**Gould** They uh—they hired me because they needed, uh—needed me to, uh, rescue them, I guess.

**Lester** [*laughs*].

**Gould** They were fined by the government six million dollars for doing what they were doing. They were, uh, hiring sisters and brothers and cousins and aunts for the people that was [*sic*] there.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** And they needed me to kind of break that up.

**Lester** Did it get better over time?

**Gould** Uh, since I was the only different-colored person there, didn't get much better.

**Lester** Mhmm.

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<sup>2</sup> American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

**Gould** But I did the best I could do.

**Lester** How long have you lived in the West, in Nevada?

**Gould** We just been here three years. I came out here to see after my mother-in-law.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** My wife's mother. Couldn't live alone again because she's in her nineties. So, we came out to, uh, take her in. Take care of her.

**Lester** Where did you live while you were working for AT&T?

**Gould** Well, I lived in New Jersey for twenty years.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** Then I moved back to Florida, and — and I was there for the rest of the time I was with AT&T.

**Lester** Mhmm.

0:10:25

**His thoughts on African American advancement and the Oviedo Colored School Museum**

**Lester** Can you talk about the changes you've seen over time? Um, how much change do you think there has been, since you [unintelligible].

**Gould** Well, I've seen a lot of good, and a lot of not so good. Some of the changes were, uh, kind of fake changes. Weren't real changes.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** But, uh, they were bearable.

**Lester** Is there something you would like to say? A lot of students will look at this oral history. Is there something you would like to say to them, because they were — they were born so much later?

**Gould** Well, take everything as it is, and just try to live [unintelligible]. That's all you can do.

**Lester** Mhmm.

**Gould** I don't think, uh, um, [unintelligible] — I don't think the color barrier will ever end. It's been there forever, so, it's — it's just the way it is.



**Lester** Um, as you think about this Oviedo Colored School Museum<sup>3</sup>, that is being, uh, built...

**Gould** Mhmm.

**Lester** ...what kinds of expectations do you have for that museum? What – what do you hope it will accomplish?

**Gould** Well, I hope that, uh, the people that go there will understand that the world is what it is, and it's not going to change too much. And they have it much better than we did when we were kids.

**Lester** Mhmm. Um, is there anything you would like to tell us that we haven't talked about or that you would expand on what we've talked about earlier?

**Gould** I can't think of any.

**Lester** Okay. Well, we appreciate your time, and we thank you, uh, for, um, doing this oral history with us.

**Gould** Mhmm.

**Lester** And this has been an oral history with Dillard Alvin Gould, conducted on August the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, but through Zoom, by Connie Lester and Jessica Oldham. And thank you very much.

**Gould** Thank you very much for having me.

*End of Interview*

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<sup>3</sup> Historic Oviedo Colored Schools Museum is located at 2170 James Dr, Oviedo, FL 32765.