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The Doctors Mayo

Lead: On December 12, 1879 the Rochester, Minnesota "Record and Union" announced that the first telephone line in town had been set up between Dr. Mayo's farm and his office above Geisinger and Newton's Drug Store. Another innovation by the founder of the most famous medical family in United States history.

Intro: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: William Worrall Mayo was born in 1819 at the beginning of a decade of great political and social

discontent in Manchester, England. While serving as a medical apprentice in Glasgow he met a young post-graduate physician from Philadelphia who re-enforced in Mayo the desire to seek a future in the United States rich, and distant with room to spare for an ambitious young man.

Mayo immigrated in 1845 and after a number of years as a tailor and clothing salesman in Lafayette, Indiana, he resumed his medical studies, received degrees from Indiana Medical College and the University of Missouri, and settled in Rochester, Minnesota in 1863. There he established an extensive surgical practice and began to raise a large family. Mrs. Mayo for a time ran a

dress-making shop to supplement their income.

In the 1880s first son Will and then Charles joined their father in what was becoming a medical practice famous throughout the state. At first the patients of the elder Dr. Mayo resisted his efforts to bring his sons on board. One man refused a house call from any but the old man. Four times Mayo sent young Dr. Will back to the sick man's house. On the fourth try, the man relented saying, if Dr. Mayo thought this young stripling was a doctor it was alright with him since it was the old man's advice he wanted anyway.

In 1889 William and his sons established St. Mary's Hospital, and as the elder Mayo gradually retired the boys moved into important leadership roles. Will administered the hospital and specialized in surgery of the abdomen and kidney. Charles originated numerous surgical innovations and did pioneer work in orthopedic and cataract surgery. Charles' son by the same name joined the practice and from this intergenerational partnership evolved the cooperative group practice which became the world famous Mayo Clinic. In the middle decades of the twentieth century the Clinic's staff had 500 attending physicians and treated in excess of 200,000 patients each year.

**At the University of Richmond, this
is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

**Clapesattle, Helen. *The Doctors Mayo*. Minneapolis. MN:
The University of Minnesota Press, 1941.**

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