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A Mayo Family Christmas: The Holidays at Mayowood

By Erica LeClaire

Over the years of Christmas tours at Mayowood Mansion, we have discovered more about how the Mayo families who lived there celebrated the holiday season.

While they didn't decorate Mayowood quite like the volunteer groups do now, the feeling of the holidays was evident throughout the home. The Mayos celebrated many Christmases at Mayowood in ways that told stories of their personalities, while continuing the service to their communities.



While preparing for our Christmas tours this year, the theme of "A Mayo Family Christmas" posed a couple of challenges. To be able to accomplish this theme, research had to be done to figure out how exactly the Mayos celebrated Christmas while they lived at Mayowood. That research showed the decorations and traditions were not extravagant and were reflective of the time periods during which the family inhabited Mayowood.



The scale of the entertaining and decoration at Mayowood would have been different to most other homes in the country. However, the Mayo families were standard American families when it came to celebrating Christmas. They decorated Christmas trees, they gathered with their friends and neighbors, they had a big meal,

and most of all, they spent time with their families. The holiday season was an excuse to get together and celebrate that.

The Mayos generally had one or two trees that were put up for decoration. According to oral histories from family members and staff, the trees would be set up in the study or living room. The ornaments and other decorations for the

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From The Director's Desk



Pat Carlson,
Executive Director

Thank you all for your support, kind words, and ideas for changes and improvement for 2018. An organization needs all of that to continually meet the needs of our customers. In fact, that let us know you care about the History Center; which is a strong comment in itself.

Non-profits in Rochester and across the US are facing uncertain times. Tax proposals, cuts in Federal funding, and a resulting shift of costs to local governments, are potential changes that appear to have negative consequences for the non-profit community. Whether the change means fewer individuals will report their tax deductions, or the local government will have to replace State and Federal financing, the effect may be the same: fewer and smaller contributions to local non-profits.

The History Center will likely be affected as well. We can survive, but may not flourish under such impacts. Each year we ask if this is the year we can add a health benefit for our employees or if we can lower our operating costs. The Board of Directors authorized repairs, replacements, and upgrades to the facilities over the several years. That forward planning reduced our reserves but reduced also future costs.

We began our year-end fund appeal in November. I encourage each member to consider making a contribution to the History Center of Olmsted County before December 31, 2017. Your support enables us to keep the admission fees and the membership dues affordable. It also allows us to expand our programs for children and offer school tours and summer camps. Whatever you choose to share with us, your donation will make a difference. With your gift, History will continue to live here!

Stay well and stop by and say 'hey' when you are in the vicinity of the History Center of Olmsted County.

From the Board President



Doug Boese
Board President

Christmas is a season of traditions and stories for me. When I was in high school my siblings and I would put on a Christmas show for my parents and my mother's parents after Christmas Eve church service and before we ate oyster stew. I would sing "Silent Night" in German and my grandfather would always comment on what a lousy voice I had.

In later years, when I had my own children, we could always persuade my grandmother to recreate the time she had to recite a poem at her school Christmas pageant. With a twinkle in her eye and her hands on the hem of her dress she would start reciting "Twinkling, twinkling, twinkling" as she wound the hem of the dress in her hands making her dress shorter and shorter just as she had so many years ago in grade school. We would all double over with laughter and my mother would get tears in her eyes from laughing so hard.

I hope you have memories like that you share with your friends and family. We are here to save memories of the people of Olmsted County. We could not save those memories without your monetary support. We appreciate what you do for us. We hope we can count on your continued support.

Merry Christmas, or Froehe Weihnachten as Grandma and Grandpa would say.

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trees would be more indicative of the times in which they lived. Doctor Charlie and Edith Mayo, the original owners of Mayowood, would have included decorations such as tinsel for their Christmas tree. Doctor Chuck and Alice Mayo would have included things like ornaments from department stores, like Marshall Fields.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the Mayos would have gatherings at Mayowood for family, friends, neighbors, and Mayo clinic employees. Charlie and Edith, who especially loved to host big parties and dances, would plan it so that they would spend Christmas Day with their family and have a traditional Christmas dinner. After that, on the night of Christmas Day, Charlie and Edith would host a large gathering for their family, friends, and neighbors to celebrate with them.

The house was set up for the Christmas party and the holiday season with decorations including garland and trees. There would be boughs of greenery all over the house. The fireplace and organ were covered with greenery. These were from real trees as well, meaning that the house would smell of pine during their gatherings and the holidays at Mayowood. It would add to the ambiance and feeling of Christmas in the house.

Granddaughter to Charlie and Edith, Mayo Kooiman, described the food for these parties as "...the most extraordinary thing...every buffet was full and then the whole dining room was strictly buffet." She explained how Mayowood was not always overly decorated and you knew it was Christmas because of the feeling you got when you were there.

One piece of decoration that was always important to Edith and Charlie was their nativity set. It would be set up on the first floor of Mayowood. For them, it was one of the most integral parts of their Christmas decorating. Chuck and Alice would also have a nativity set up in the main area of the house.



When Chuck and Alice took ownership of Mayowood, they also hosted Christmas gatherings for their family. Additionally, they hosted parties for the people on staff at Mayo Clinic. Chuck and Alice generally served light refreshments and entertained their guests just as they did during their many dinners at Mayowood. Chuck and Alice even occasionally allowed their household staff to hold their family Christmas parties at Mayowood.



The decorations that Chuck and Alice had were simple, like those used by Charlie and Edith. There was greenery such as garland and wreaths throughout the open areas of the home. Wreaths were hung in windows and doorways to outwardly show the Christmas spirit. They also hung a large angel over the stairs from the main entry to the house.

As both families entertained guests around Christmas, they made sure to have music playing throughout the house. Both generations who lived in the house would have a musician from town at Mayowood to play the organ. The organ would play Christmas carols during the evenings of these gatherings to keep the holiday spirit

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going throughout the house.

The Christmas tree at Mayowood was generally brought to the house from the property. It was an excursion to go up the river, pick out a tree to cut down, then bring it back to Mayowood. This family tradition continued while there were inhabitants at Mayowood. Usually the tree would be set up in the living room, but sometimes it would be in the study. The children decorated the tree with ornaments and decorations that would follow the traditional styles of their time.



The families celebrated Christmas morning like many other families with the children and grandchildren opening presents around the Christmas tree. The grandchildren of Charlie and Edith usually came to Mayowood with their parents after they finished opening presents at their own houses. They would be given a gift from Charlie and Edith, known as “Granny and Granddaddy” to them, to open before Christmas dinner at Mayowood.

Celebrations at Mayowood were usually open to anyone who “could be put in a good mood” according to Mayo Kooiman. The holiday season was shared by the Mayos with their family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. They made as many people feel welcome for the holidays as they could.

The Mayo families who lived at Mayowood had their own traditions and events, but one thing that always stayed the same was the feeling of the holiday season when you came to Mayowood. There were opportunities to gather as a family, with neighbors and friends, and celebrate. Children and grandchildren were around as well as colleagues and neighbors. They all were able to feel the spirit of the holiday season while gathered at Mayowood.

The Mayowood Christmas tours have signified the beginning of the holiday season here in Rochester. Decorations going up throughout the house reflect a time gone by. They tell stories of dinners and parties. This year, the heart of the holiday season while recognizing the people who lived in the house and how they used it has been displayed. This consideration by the volunteers who spend hours collecting, organizing, and displaying decorations has been imperative in achieving this theme. A Mayo Family Christmas has been realized in the rooms at Mayowood.



Thank you to everyone who helped make Christmas at Mayowood a success.

An Update on the Collection

By Ryan Harren, Collections Manager

Several years ago, the History Center began a serious push to complete a comprehensive inventory of our collection. Since our founding in 1926, we have collected items with the intent that they would be of historic value to future generations. Unfortunately, the staff and volunteers often collected items with limited historic value. Additionally, they collected many items that possess historic value but are not relevant to Olmsted County. As a result, our collection has grown to be too large to manage effectively, so large in fact, that we did not even know everything we had in the collection.

As we have discovered during the inventory, HCOC is out of space to properly house and preserve our collection. The archival collection fills up nearly all available shelf space in the Otis N. Wicklund Archives, while the material culture collection, our three-dimensional artifact collection, has filled three storage rooms in the museum as well as two storage buildings and two barns on the grounds. Not to mention the Mayo family artifacts housed at Mayowood Mansion. The simple fact is that we cannot continue to house and preserve these items with our current resources; we do not have the space to store them and we do not have the staff or funding to care for them.

Although the inventory is still incomplete, the History Center is beginning to remove artifacts from the collection in large quantities after careful consideration. This process is referred to as deaccessioning in the museum community. While we are grateful to our donors for bringing artifacts to us, in the past we accepted thousands of artifacts and archival materials that have little intrinsic historic value. Even the artifacts with historic value do not always fit into our collection scope – the history of Olmsted County.

During the summer of 2017 the History Center and Mechanical History Round Table (MHRT), began cleaning the Quonset Barn located on the Ralph Stoppel Farm and developing it into exhibit space. Both organizations had used the Quonset Barn as a storage building for agricultural machinery and other equipment. The barn became so full that it was nearly impossible to walk from one end to the other. As part of both this project and the comprehensive inventory, the History Center removed nine pieces of machinery that we determined were no longer useful for our collection and sold them at a joint History Center/MHRT auction. Proceeds from the sale of collection pieces are allocated to a collection acquisition fund for the purchase of new artifacts. As a result of the auction, the Quonset Barn is now clear enough to allow visitors to walk through, and we hope to have it available for seasonal tours beginning in 2018.



The other facet of the History Center's comprehensive inventory is the Archival Collection. Thanks to the efforts and dedication of interns, volunteers, and our archivist, we have nearly completed an inventory of books in the research center and archives. Over the next few months, we will be removing just under 2000 books from the collection. While it would be nice to retain the thousands of antique books and reference books in the collection, many possess no connection to Olmsted County's history. Of the books that will be removed from the collection, most were purchased by staff or were kept solely for reference or as general historic research materials. However, these materials are largely outdated and many are available online. By removing these books from our collection, it will free up space that can be used for proper archival storage of our other collections or to house new materials more directly relevant to the people of Olmsted County. Inquiries regarding our collections policies or deaccessions can be directed to Collections Manager Ryan Harren.

Educational Programming

By Aaron Saterdalen, Education & Program Coordinator

The Harvest Moon Fall Fest was held on October 19 with a scarecrow decorating contest, tours of the cabin and schoolhouse, apple press, rope and broom making, hayrides, Prairie Climbing Wall, and Impact Entertainment for this year's fall festival. Many people enjoyed the beautiful fall day both young and old. Thank you to everyone who came.

The 4th annual Adult Scavenger Hunt, held on Saturday, October 28 had 25 teams participate. Thank you sponsors for supporting this program! I want to thank History Center staff and volunteers for helping with this program. The 2017 scavenger hunt had a theme focused on plaques, statues, murals, and cornerstones; which there are many of in Rochester. This clue was written and used in the 2017 scavenger hunt and gives an example of what teams faced within their 3-hour scavenger hunt. *"I have leaned toward my brother for years. Find the statue of the two of us with me doing my leaning thing. Who are we, where are we?" Answer: Dr's Will and Charlie in the Feith Family Statuary Park.*



Scavenger Hunter at the statues

Education & Programs:



The 2018 Princess Café monthly lecture series is scheduled. In January, John Weiss presents, "The Wild Zumbro;" the February Princess Café presents Paul Koeller, "The 1918 Flu Pandemic," and in March John Hunziker presents, "The History of the Rochester Public Library." If you haven't attended a Princess Café before, make 2018 the year! The 2018 Princess Café lecture series schedule is available on our website, or pick up a copy of the schedule at the History Center front desk.

The Alan Calavano Lecture Series will be held again in 2018 with a twist. Now called History Happy Hour, this program will take place at the History Center. The lecture series will begin on Tuesday, January 16 from 5:30 pm-7 pm. Happy Hour will be from 5:30-6 pm with the lecture starting at 6 pm. Yes, drinking an alcoholic beverage during the lecture is acceptable! Please join us as we look at civic issues, historical events and interesting people. Join us for this new venture.

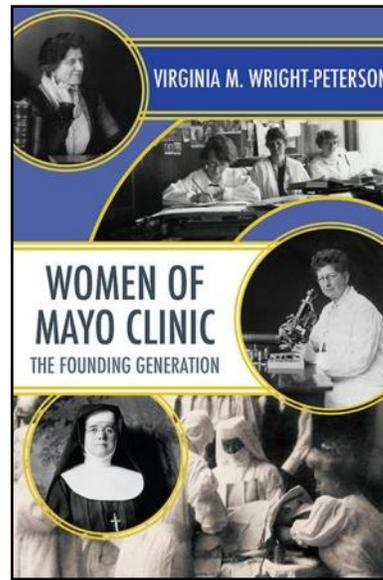
The History Center of Olmsted County will have indoor Winterfest activities from 10 am – 1 pm on Saturday, February 3 to help celebrate the Minnesota winter. There will be corn shelling, apple press, coloring station, vintage toys, and much more. The History Center's exhibit hall will be open to explore with the *Olmsted County In the Great War* on display. The cost of the event is \$5 per child; parents are free. *Sleigh Rides to support the Special Olympics will be available on the same day at the Ralph Stoppel Farmstead! Donations for the rides are welcomed.*

Special Events

By Aleta Maccini, Event Planner

Join us for a delightful evening of education and entertainment at the newly renovated Mayowood Mansion. Throughout the evening you will meet many of the brilliant and dedicated women from the earliest years of the Mayo Clinic.

Begin your experience by relaxing over an elegantly catered spread through Canadian Honker of Rochester. Enjoy a glass of wine as you become an important character from Mayo's formative years with a table of historic friends in a guided conversation. After eating, you will have the opportunity to tour the rest of the mansion at your leisure and meet several historic figures featured in the book *Women of Mayo Clinic: The Founding Generation* by Virginia M. Wright-Peterson. As an added bonus to your evening, you will have the opportunity to meet the author herself!



Please consider joining us for this exclusive event celebrating the crucial early contributions women made to the creation of the Mayo Clinic while raising funds for the preservation of the Mayowood collection.

Tickets go on sale February 1st, 2018 - Reservations required.

Contact Aleta Maccini with questions or to make a reservation.
events@olmstedhistory.com OR 507-282-9447

Thank you to our event sponsors from 2017:

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- Greater Rochester Arts & Cultural Trust
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- Mechanical History Round Table
- Meshbeshier & Spence
- Minnesota Energy
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- Post Bulletin
- Prairie Walls
- Prime Lending
- Rochester Civil War Round Table
- Rochester Commercial Banks
- Rochester Trolley Tours
- Rochester Women's Magazine
- Rossi Auto Body
- Schmitt Automotive Repair
- Sekapp Orchard
- Superior Screeners
- Wild Bill's
- Ye Olde Butcher Shoppe

Volunteer Spotlight

Marilyn Burbank and Lorraine Keith

Marilyn Burbank and Lorraine Keith have long been volunteers, members, and donors here at the History Center. In the 1970s, ten members including Marilyn and Lorraine with librarian Doris Englehart, started the Olmsted County Genealogical Society. Exploration of their individual family heritage has kept them involved ever since.

Marilyn and her husband, Mahlon, met at Northwestern University, where she got a degree in Accounting. They first moved to Rochester in 1958 for Mahlon's residency. They left for a time in Washington, D.C. and returned to settle here. She started researching her family and expanded her interests to explore her husband's origins as well. She found a long history of family in America and ancestors in the Revolutionary War. "It's all in the story behind the family tree; who were these people? Why did they come here, why did they settle there, what did they do?" Marilyn stated.



Marilyn Burbank



Lorraine Keith

Lorraine and her husband, Robert, moved here in 1962, for his work in a new Mayo position, a speech pathologist. Lorraine grew up in rural North Dakota and taught in a country school and 'town' school. After her children were older, she registered at RCC and got her R.N. Lorraine explained, "I'm interested in the genealogy. I think it's important to preserve and index material so that families and people can find their records and learn about their ancestors."

Like Marilyn, Lorraine was able to document a relative in the Revolutionary War. Both women are members of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), one of the History Center's partner organizations. Lorraine and Marilyn contributed to the early efforts of the Genealogical Society, including the published compilation of tombstone inscriptions from all the cemeteries in Olmsted County. That work can be found in the History Center Library.

The library here is first-class, according to Marilyn. There is research material in the library and archives not available elsewhere. Lorraine believes the archives preserve the essential documents people need to trace their Olmsted County roots. We thank Marilyn and Lorraine for all they have done for the History Center over the years.

The Alan Calavano Postcard Collection

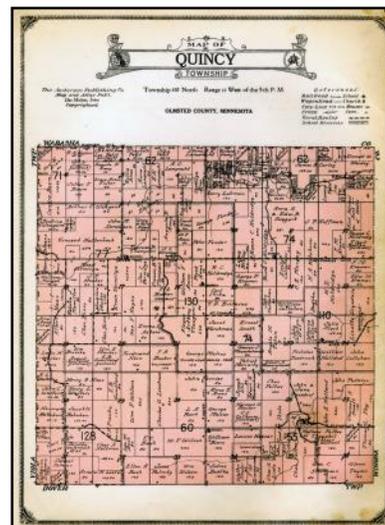
by Krista Lewis, Archivist

When Alan Calavano passed on March 18, 2016, the History Center lost a dear friend, advocate, and historian. Often referred to as “Mr. Rochester Historian,” he contributed much to the collection and dissemination of the history of both Rochester and Olmsted County. He accomplished this through a number of historical walking tours and lectures, as well as his book, *Rochester*, which illustrates Rochester’s history and development through picture postcards as part of Arcadia Publishing’s Postcard History Series. Perhaps only second to White Castle, postcards were Alan’s passion; he was the definition of a deltiologist, or someone who collects and studies postcards. This passion of his is made plain by the fact that the postcards used in his book were all his own. Dozens if not hundreds of postcards are featured, yet they are a mere fraction of what Alan collected. We know this because Alan made the Archives the lucky recipient of that part of his collection that pertained to Olmsted County. In total, the Archives is now home to just over 2,600 postcards neatly arranged by Alan himself by subject into about 20 albums. Alan’s interest was not just in Olmsted County, however, so one can imagine the number of postcards that found homes elsewhere. While the Archives is already home to a significant collection of postcards, which as a volunteer Alan had a hand in organizing, this addition is far more comprehensive and almost all the cards are in excellent condition. Many of them show scenes of Rochester, from its downtown streets to its parks, schools, churches, homes, businesses, and hospitals. Others in the collection include postcards used by local businesses for marketing purposes and numerous cartoonish variations on the “Greetings from Rochester” theme. The collection is not quite ready for the public yet, but we are working diligently to process it, part of which includes making high-resolution scans of the postcards to preserve their condition. While Alan is missed daily, he is far from forgotten and will surely have a lasting presence in the Archives of the History Center of Olmsted County.



A Visit to the Research Center

Like the city directories featured in the last newsletter, plat maps of Olmsted County are a valuable resource in our Research Center that offers more than simple directional information. Plat maps are maps that show a division of property. They often include the names of the property owners, along with the location of houses, churches, cemeteries, schools, school districts, railroad lines, roadways, and rivers and creeks. Additionally, since our plat maps date to as early as 1868 and as recently as 1928, they offer a great window into the transformation of the county and its individual townships. Many visitors have used these to figure out where their ancestors used to live, and once that is determined, it is common for them to want to take a trip to the old homestead. Of course, one is lucky to find anything that resembles the old homestead, but it is still a fun exercise to take a plat map from the 1800s and match it to a map on Google.



Quincy Township, 1928

A Visit to Mayowood



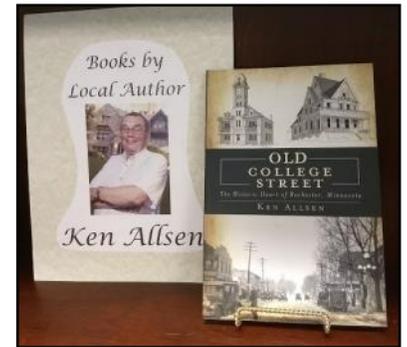
The historic Mayowood Mansion closes for the season on December 17. Thank you to everyone who stopped by for tours, both during the regular season and for Christmas tours. Mayowood Mansion will open again for tours in April 2018. Regular tours are \$17 for adults and \$5 for children 2-12 and last approximately 50 minutes.

A special thank you to the Mayo Clinic for all the work that was done to the Mansion this past year, helping keep the memory of the Mayos that lived in the house alive. Another thank you to the Friends of Mayowood for all their contributions to helping preserve the items in the house and the house itself.

Visit the History Center's website for more information about Mayowood.

A Visit to the Gift Shop

The History Center Gift Shop offers a wide variety of local authors and interesting topics. This fall we are featuring two local authors, P.S. Duffy and Amy Jo Hahn. Duffy recently released her novel, *The Cartographer of No Man's Land*, a drama set in the throes of World War I. Hahn's book explores some of hot spots of Rochester's past that have been forgotten by time. Among the other local authors featured in our gift shop are Ken Allsen, Richard Krom, Raymond N. Brown, Virginia Wentzel, Thomas Ostrom, and Dick Klobuchar all of whom cover a wide variety of local and regional historical topics. Stop by and check them out!



History Center
of Olmsted County

William Dee Cabin

Historic Mayowood Mansion

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Improving Collections Care at the HCOC

By Dan Nowakowski, Curators of Collections and Exhibits

In October, the History Center of Olmsted County collaborated with the Mayo Design Team, Mayo Clinic Historical Unit, and Mayo Clinic Nurse Anesthesia Education, to install a new exhibit. This exhibit focuses on the chronological history of the Nurse Anesthesia Program at Mayo Clinic. The Nurse Anesthesia Program and Mayo Clinic have been working together for over a century. This exhibit has a number of artifacts and pictures to highlight and explain the history of both the program and the clinic.



Edith Mayo was a central figure in developing the program for Nurse Anesthetist. She was the first Nurse Anesthetist on staff for the Mayo Clinic and helped train the Sisters of St. Francis along with another pioneer Alice Magaw. Alice expanded the Nurse Anesthetist Program by publishing papers and expanding the knowledge of anesthesia in surgery. She received the title of “Mother of Anesthesia” for her work to expand the program at Mayo Clinic. Additional events and Mayo Nurses progressed the education of the Nurse Anesthetist program to what it is today.

In addition to the new exhibit, the History Center of Olmsted County will be hosting a number of different traveling exhibits in 2018 and 2019. The first of these traveling exhibits is “Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of Japanese American WWII Experiences,” created by the Go for Broke National Education Center. This exhibit will be on display May through July 2018.

Curiosities from the Collection



In the History Center’s collection, we have a wide variety of women’s clothing, ranging from the early homesteaders of Olmsted County to current residents. This clothing highlights the different eras of female fashion from the hoop skirts of the 1860s, to the sleek flapper dresses of the 1920s and to the Tailored Styles of the 1970s.

Currently on display is a dress that was a shocker to the fashion world and became a symbol of revolution in women’s fashion. This dress is the Flapper Dress from the “Roaring Twenties” with a sequined top. The skirt on a flapper dress rose just below the knee, which helped with the style of dancing that became popular in the 1920s. This bold new style shifted away from emphasizing women’s curves and instead highlighted a boyish look. Women would continue the boyish style with shortened hair along with a rebellious behavior that was associated with flappers of the time.

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HCOC Programs and Events Calendar

January:

- 1** - History Center Closed
- 10** - Princess Café, John Weiss presents “The Wild Zumbro River,” 9 a.m.
- 16** - History Happy Hour, Dean Urdahl presents “The Minnesota State Capital and its Fine Arts,” 5:30 p.m.

February:

- 2** - Winterfest for Kids, 10 a.m.—1 p.m.
- 14** - Princess Café, Paul Koeller presents “1918 Flu Pandemic: Southern Minnesota Day by Day Through the Headlines,” 9 a.m.
- 20** - History Happy Hour, W. Bruce Fye presents “Mayo Clinic From 1864-1939,” 5:30 p.m.

March:

- 14** - Princess Café, John Hunziker presents “The History of the Rochester Public Library,” 9 a.m.
- 20** - History Happy Hour, Steve Borchardt presents “Police Methodology and Use of Force,” 5:30 p.m.
- 24** - Women of Mayo: The Founding Generation, see page 7 for more details

For a complete list of upcoming events and more information, visit our website at www.olmstedhistory.com