FOUR DOCTORS MAYO IN MASONRY

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The saga of the Doctors Mayo of Rochester, Minnesota begins with William Worrall Mayo. He was born in the English village of Eccles, near the industrial city of Manchester on May 31, 1819. His ancestors included French Huguenots and Flemish Protestants who had fled religious persecution on the continent. His impressionable years of boyhood and early manhood were spent in the midst of unemployment, labor violence and the political evils which the Reform Bill of 1832 was designed to correct. These experiences could quite understandably have had an influence on his espousing Populist causes in Minnesota in the closing decades of the Nineteenth Century.

William Worrall Mayo's education included the study of Latin, Greek and English Literature, together with mathematics and what was then called Natural Philosophy. He attended some one of the several colleges in Manchester. From John Dalton, his tutor, the future Doctor Mayo developed a significant interest in chemistry. After studying medicine in the hospitals of London and Glasgow, he migrated to New York where he was employed in Bellevue Hospital, perhaps as a chemist or pharmacist. He then began a move westward which in time would take him out on the raw frontier of Minnesota. He spent some time in Buffalo, New York, then went on to Lafayette, Indiana, where he became a tailor, returned to medicine and earned an M.D. degree in near-by Laporte, Indiana where he also met the woman who became his wife—Louise Abagail Wright.

They fled the malarial flats of Indiana, Dr. Mayo acquired another M.D. degree in St. Louis, and wound up in St. Paul, Minnesota where Mrs. Mayo resumed the millinery business in which she had been engaged in Indiana. The doctor turned to exploring and prospecting. He travelled on foot through the wilderness to Lake Superior clad in Indian moccasins, on snow shoes, and on several occasions by canoe. Some time after his return to St. Paul the Mayos went up the Minnesota River to a place near LeSueur, and later into the village of Le Sueur where William James was born on June 29, 1861. Dr. Mayo participated heroically in the Sioux War of 1862, and then in 1863 came to Rochester, Minnesota, having been named the examining surgeon of the Enrollment Board. The Civil War was using up men, and Congress, in March 1863, passed the Conscription or Enrollment Act. In May, 1863 William Worrall Mayo left his family in LeSueur and journeyed to Rochester to begin examining volunteers and screening men conscripted for military duty.

In Rochester Dr. Mayo was, in years to come, destined to lay the foundation of the Mayo Clinic which evolved under the guidance of his gifted sons: William James (Dr. Will), and Charles Horace (Dr. Charlie). They followed his example, enlarged upon his achievements, and publically acclaimed him as their teacher. The story is delightfully told by Helen Clapesattle in THE DOCTORS MAYO. It was also in Rochester that William Worrall Mayo first saw Masonic Light. This was an experience which he shared with one of his sons and two of his grandsons—all of them members of Rochester Lodge No. 21, A.F. & A.M.

Three months after arriving in Rochester, William Worrall Mayo petitioned Rochester Lodge for the degrees of Masonry. His petition was read on Monday, August 10, 1863 and was referred to a committee of three. Who his sponsors were, and what attracted him to Freemasonry, we do not know. The minutes, laid up among the records in the archives of Rochester Lodge are skimpy during this period—in contrast with those written by several of the secretaries during recent decades. The 1916 fire which destroyed the Temple, while it did not burn the minute books of the secretaries and recorders, did consume the files of petitions and other documents. On August 24 the investigating committee appointed by the Master reported favorably on Dr. Mayo's petition. The ballot was spread and came out clear. On September 21, 1863 Dr. William Worrall Mayo became an Entered Apprentice. His fee for the degree was five dollars.

On October 5 the Lodge was opened on the Master Mason's Degree, suspended for the purpose of opening on the Entered Apprentice Degree in order to examine Dr. Mayo as to his proficiency as an Apprentice. His performance being satisfactory, a Lodge of Fellowcrafts was opened, and William Worrall Mayo was passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft. Again he paid a fee of $5.00.

On October 19, at a Special Communication, the routine was repeated: he was examined for proficiency, then raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, after having paid another $5.00 fee. As on the two previous occasions he was the only candidate. Who took what parts that evening we shall never know. On January 18, 1864, a Brother Risker was made a Master Mason. The minutes of the meeting that evening are in the handwriting of Dr. W.W. Mayo who signed them as acting secretary. Some time later (the date is blurred) Dr. Mayo is listed as a member of the Finance Committee. There is no evidence of his ever holding a line office.

According to Clapesattle, Dr. Mayo, during his tour of duty on the Civil War examining board was exceedingly busy. His associate was Dr. Hector Galloway, also a member of Rochester Lodge. His may have been the sponsoring influence that led this first of the Mayos into the fraternity; but that is only conjecture. Early in January, 1864, Dr. Mayo brought his wife and son and daughter Gertrude from LeSueur to live in the house he had built on the ground where later the first Mayo Clinic building was erected—the red brick structure known in Rochester as the Nineteen­fourteen Building. Here his next son, Charles Horace, was born on July 19, 1865. This son would, twenty-five years later, become the second Mayo in Masonry. His older brother Will, almost saw the light—but not quite. Time and circumstance interfered.

William Worrall Mayo, in 1865, applied for membership in Halcyon Chapter No. 8 Royal Arch Masons. On May 26 of that year he became a Mark Master, on June 1, a Past Master, on July 6, a Most Excellent Master, and on July 19 he was Exalted a Royal Arch Mason. On December 4, 1868, Dr. Mayo received the Orders of Templars in Home Commandery No. 5 in Rochester. No extant records in the archives of Rochester Lodge are skimpy during this period—in contrast with those written by several of the secretaries during recent decades. The 1916 fire which destroyed the Temple, while it did not burn the minute books of the secretaries and recorders, did consume the files of petitions and other documents. On August 24 the investigating committee appointed by the Master reported favorably on Dr. Mayo's petition. The ballot was spread and came out clear. On September 21, 1863 Dr. William Worrall Mayo became an Entered Apprentice. His fee for the degree was five dollars.

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nesota's most daring, successful and busy surgeons, and his presidency of the Minnesota Medical Association all pretty well underlie the story of his involvement. He continued to be heavily scheduled after Will and Charlie entered into practice with him.

The minutes of the three Masonic bodies in Rochester do not reveal any extensive activity on the part of William Worrall Mayo, either as an officer or as a ritualist. Rather, he lived the tenets of Freemasonry in his family, his profession, and to an amazing degree as a concerned citizen and public official in the city, the school district, the county and the state. When Dr. Mayo came to Rochester to help keep volunteers and draftees for service in the Union Army it was first as an agent of the state of Minnesota and then as an examining physician under the War Department. The “Little Doctor” as he was known in the valley of the Minnesota River, had played a heroic role during the Sioux Uprising at New Ulm. Helen Clapesattle tells the story graphically. After being dismissed by the War Department he built a home in Rochester, helped establish the Rochester Library Association, and served on the school board where he prodded the City Fathers to build “the largest and most costly school building” in the state. He was also chairman of a committee appointed to visit classes and report conditions to the public. He deplored the feeble voices and poor enunciation which he found in at least one class. He did not generalize.

When the local Republican Party caucus nominated William Worrall Mayo to the school board for a fourth time a local church zealot and “temperance” leader smeared him as an infidel and a friend of Demon Rum. Demonstrably, he was neither. The phenomenon known today as “McCarthyism” is not confined to any one man, nor to any single period in history. Dr. Mayo went over to the Democratic Party, and later in life, to the Anti-Monopoly Party and the Alliance. Toward the weaknesses of individual human beings the Little Doctor was tolerant; toward abuse of power and toward corruption in high places he was the sternest of puritans. Too many church officials, including his own, have been called upon to report their own achievements as diagnosticians and as surgeons with a burgeoning practice. Just how much time Dr. Charlie gave to Masonry during the 1890's has not been determined. Dr. Mayo received the Orders of Templary in Rochester's Home Commandery No. 5.

The work load of the Mayo brothers during the coming decades was to prove very demanding. They read extensively about what was happening on the frontier of medicine, but more significantly, they began to gain a reputation as surgeons and watched them work. Furthermore, they were called upon to report their own achievements as diagnosticians and as surgeons with a burgeoning practice. Just how much time Dr. Charlie gave to Masonry during the 1890's has not been determined. He was present at a Special Communication of Rochester Lodge on May 10, 1900 which was called to receive a report from the Directors of the Temple Association which revealed an offer from the partnership of Mayo, Stinchfield and Graham and the drug firm of Weber and Heintz to rent the first floor of a projected Masonic Temple. A motion to accept the proposal was put to a rising vote. Fifty voted in the affirmative; three voted “No”.

The incorporators of the Masonic Temple Association of Rochester had their first meeting three years earlier, on May 1, 1897 in the office of Burt Eaton, attorney for the Mayo Association. He was one of the nine incorporators—all of them powers in the Rochester Masonic Bodies. One of the venerable gentlemen had died on April 18. On May 20 his place was filled by Dr. Augustus Stinchfield, once of Eyota, but now a member of the Mayo firm. Conflict of interest seemed not to concern the Brethren, for at various times one or another of the Directors would sell their products to the Temple Association or lease space in the building. The practice would not catch up with them until in the Depression Years of the 1930's when a merchant who was chronically behind in his rent payments was finally dropped from membership on the Board.

In 1897 the Temple Association, in anticipation of building, had bought three lots at what is now Second Street and First Avenue Southwest where the present Temple stands. They “passed the hat” among the Brethren, they borrowed $10,000 from an estate over which attorney Eaton was Executor and Trustee, and over the years they borrowed extensively from Dr. Will and Dr. Charlie. In July, 1900 the bid of J. and W.A. Elliott for $21,588.00 was accepted and construction began. Other bids were received for installations within the building, and the third lot (25 feet wide) was later sold. A two-story extension was built at the west end of the Temple at the request of the Mayos, and a rent contract was drawn.

In 1911 a ten-year lease of the first story was made out to Mayo and Graham for $2000.00. The first lease had called for $1000.00 per annum. No mention was made of Weber and Heintz. According to Clapesattle, Dr. Will out-maneuvered Heintz who, in turn, was trying to work a scheme. The Mayos took over the lease of the entire floor. Heintz disappeared from the scene and the drug firm became Weber and Judd which is its name today. The first mention of Weber and Judd in the minutes of the Temple Association is made in 1913. In 1915 the secretary of the Temple Association reported that the Mayos had surrendered their lease. The doctors had built on the rear side of the red brick building locally known as the Nineteen-fourteen.
Building. In it the Mayo Clinic, as an independent institution, would continue to evolve.

On November 19, 1913 the Board of Directors approved a fifteen-year lease to Weber and Judd and ordered fire-proofing of the furnace room. On January 17, 1916 the building caught fire and burned out completely. The representative of the Temple Association met the next day and voted to re-build at the same location. In July they voted to borrow $60,000.00 from W.J. and C.H. Mayo. The building was constructed of fire-proof materials. In 1919 the west end of the third floor was leased to the Mayo Clinic for use as a cafeteria. In 1923 C.M. Judd was elected a Director to replace John M. Rowley, one of the incorporators of the Association. In that year the Worthy Matron, Maude Gimbert, became the first representative of the Eastern Star among the stockholders. In 1919 Dr. C.H. Mayo had been elected to the Board of Directors, an office he held until January, 1936. In 1939 both of the distinguished brothers departed for that land from whose bourne all was vanity. In answer to his secretary who asked what was the matter he replied, "I've just done my last operation." In contrast with Will's 59 years, Dr. Charlie had been only twenty-five when he knocked at the door of the lodge room. On several occasions it was suggested that Will be made a "Mason at sight" by the Grand Master. This never occurred because his brother, Dr. Charlie objected. The present writer verified this information in a conversation with Roy Chadwick, Master of Rochester Lodge in 1925.

On January 26, 1920 favorable reports were received on the petitions of Chuck Mayo and John Mayo Berkman as well as on the petitions of several other men. The ballot which followed was in each instance clear. Not until August 1 did the two young men appear for the Entered Apprentice Degree. The occasion was a Special Communication for five candidates. Judge Vernon Gates was Master of the Lodge, but presiding in the East for the conferral ceremony was Jay L. Harwick of the Clinic Business office. On September 6, 1920, at another Special Communication, Brothers Mayo and Berkman, together with three others, were examined as to their proficiency and then Passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft. A week later, on the afternoon of September 13, the same group of candidates were examined for proficiency in the Lecture of the Second Degree. The first section of the Master Mason's Degree was conferred that afternoon, there was a dinner at 6:30, followed by the second section in the evening. No mention in the minutes is made of Chuck's father, Dr. Charlie, being present.

On September 8, 1924 the last of the Mayo petitions was read in Rochester Lodge. It came from Dr. Chuck's younger brother, Joseph Graham Mayo. On September 22 it was balloted and on December 22 Joe and four others were entered as Masonic Apprentices with Past Master Lyle Utzinger of the Clinic Business Office presiding in the East. On December 28 Joseph Mayo and two other candidates were Passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft. The minutes of that meeting are very brief and lacking in detail. Not until the next autumn, on September 7, at a Special Communication, was the Third Degree conferred. The candidates were two: Joseph Graham Mayo and Max Kjernan, son of a local grocer. There was a dinner between the first and second sections of the degree. Present were more Masonic dignitaries than at any other Mayo raising. They were the Deputy Grand Master, Hayden French, Past Grand Masters Herman Neld and Dr. W.N. Kendrick, together with the Grand Orator, Dr. Charles Horace Mayo, father of Joseph, who the evening raised his son to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. There were speeches at that evening by the distinguished visitors and by Dr. Charlie. No mention is made of older brother Chuck.

Joseph Graham Mayo went no further into the labyrinth of Masonry's complex structure. In November, 1936 while hunting along the Mississippi River near Alma, Wisconsin with his Golden Retriever, Foosie, his car was hit by a train coming from the East. Joe and his dog were killed. In a simple ceremony Dr. Joe was buried at Mayowood, the rural estate of his father and mother. With the consent of Joe's parents and his widow, Ruth, Foosie was buried in
the coffin with her beloved master. The minister who conducted the burial service was somewhat reluctant to officiate over a coffin containing a dog. Alice, Dr. Chuck's wife, maintained that half of her husband died in the loss of Joe. Chuck did not dispute that opinion.

Dr. Charles W. Mayo did seek more, further and added light in Masonry. On December 26, 1922 he received the first three degrees in Halcyon Chapter. Two days later, on December 28, he was Exalted to the Royal Arch. On December 1923 Chuck received the Orders of Templary in Home Commandery No. 5 in Rochester. He did not become a member of the Scottish Rite until 1967. At the direction of the then Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Minnesota, John B. Tomhave, this writer and four other members of what was then the Valley of Winona communicated the Degrees, 4-32 to Brother Chuck. This was done in the lodge room of the Temple in Rochester. The Scottish Rite record of Brother Charles W. Mayo, 32° is on file in the Valley of Minneapolis. The autographs of the Brethren who took part in the Communication Ceremony can be found in Chuck's copy of MORALS AND DOGMA in Maywood, now under the control of the Olmsted County Historical Society. According to Noble Ben Ratzlaff, Recorder of Osman Temple, Dr. Charles Horace Mayo was created a Noble of Osman Temple on April 27, 1966 and was a Life Member. Dr. Charles William Mayo was created a member of Osman Temple on June 7, 1960 at a Field Ceremonial in Rochester, Minnesota, the first such Ceremonial ever authorized by Osman Temple.

In all but one aspect, Chuck's career in Masonry paralleled that of his father. Chuck did not attain the Thirty-Third Degree. Both father and son were Grand Orators of their Grand Lodge, Chuck having been appointed by Grand Master Joseph L. Seltzer in 1967. On March 28, 1968 he delivered his oration before the members of the Grand Lodge assembled at their Annual Communication. In his address Dr. Chuck first paid tribute to the Masons of Minnesota for the support they had given to Medicine. He may well have had in mind the Masonic Memorial Hospital on the Campus of the University of Minnesota. It had been paid for in large part by money raised from within the ranks of Minnesota Masons and had been presented to the University for research into the causes and treatment of cancer. The speaker then addressed himself to the problem of training doctors, providing adequate medical care and dental care while avoiding the evils of any socialistic plan. In contrast with his father's long and sometimes discursive speech, Chuck's was approximately 1,500 words in length. His shortest speech, however, was one this writer heard at a ceremonial occasion for the Masonic Memorial Hospital on the campus of the University. Several speakers preceded him, of whom one went on and on. When, late in the evening, Chuck's turn came, he rose, announced that everything that needed to be said had been said, and then sat down.

In his address before the Grand Lodge his closing words were an affirmation of faith: “There will always be doctors because they are necessary. There will always be those who will accept the calling, for that is what it is. The problems are many and they will grow, but they will be solved because they must be.” At no point in his discourse that day were his words enlivened by the famous Mayo wit which was illustrated by the story told by Lowell Thomas in his July 29, 1968 broadcast in which he commented on the life and death of Dr. Charles W. Mayo. The story was of young surgeon Chuck's reassuring a frightened woman patient by telling her: “I'm just starting—I can't afford to lose a patient”.

The light had gone out of Chuck's life. Alice, his wife, who was perhaps the major stabilizing force in his life had died of a lingering illness. In his auto-biography Dr. Mayo said: “The happiest day in my life was the day I married her, and the worst was November 9, 1967, the day she died”. He was very somber that evening in the Temple when we communicated to him the Degrees of the Scottish Rite. Whatever plans had been made to award him the honors that had been bestowed upon his father came to naught. On July 28, 1968, while on a Sunday drive around the Mayo family estate, he died in an automobile accident. He was the last of the Mayos on the Mayo Clinic Staff and the last of the Rochester Mayos in Freemasonry.

RESOLUTION:—That all papers prepared and presented before the membership of Educational Lodge No. 1002 shall be reviewed by the Editorial Committee appointed by the Master at the beginning of his year in Office, before their publication and distribution. Such committee is hereby given authority to delete any subject matter which in its judgment it considers to be of esoteric or controversial nature. Be it further resolved that each paper published for distribution shall have printed therein the above resolution.

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