

Biography

Plummer was born in Hamilton, [Fillmore County, Minnesota](#). He earned his medical degree from Chicago's [Northwestern University](#) in 1898, and then returned to [Racine, Minnesota](#) to assist his father Dr. Albert Plummer in private practice.

The Plummer House.

He became a partner in the Clinic practice in 1901, and Dr. [William Mayo](#) would later quip that hiring Dr. Plummer was the best day's work he had ever done.

In 1917 construction began on the [Plummer House](#), the English Tudor mansion where Dr. Plummer and his family lived. The house was designed by Ellerbe & Round, and boasted many innovations that were rare at the time. Daisy Plummer gave the furnished house and property to the Rochester Art Center in 1971. Her wish was that the house and grounds would be used by the people of Rochester and Clinic guest as a Center for the Arts. This remarkable gift was later transferred to the Rochester Park and Recreation Department and is now used as a rental facility for private parties.



Architectural detail representing Dr. Plummer on the Plummer Building.

Not only a talented physician, Dr. Plummer was also a successful scientist and inventor. He developed a cable-carrier system for circulating correspondence within the clinic, directed the early development of Mayo's clinical laboratories, as well as bringing in [Louis B. Wilson\[1\]](#) in 1905 to develop and manage the diagnostic and research labs, and was the first to understand and operate an [X-ray](#) machine at the Clinic. Dr. Will Mayo called Plummer a "a pioneer in the development of X-ray diagnosis and therapy". Perhaps one of his greatest contributions was the development of a simple, easily retrievable medical record system that became the model for record keeping worldwide.

In the early 1920s, Dr. Plummer worked with Ellerby & Round to design the building that now bears his name. Located in downtown [Rochester, Minnesota](#), the [Plummer Building](#) was well ahead of its time, boasting many amenities that are still in use today including a telephone system, cross-indexed patient records, a power plant, subways, and a [pneumatic](#) tube delivery system. Dr. Plummer is considered by many to be the architect of the modern medical practice. His innovative system and building designs, as well as his early understanding of the importance of the diagnostic and research aspects of the clinical practice, allowed for the creation of the integrated group practice and medical specialization.

Plummer died in [Rochester, Minnesota](#).

Legacy

[Plummer-Vinson syndrome](#) is named after him and [Porter Paisley Vinson](#). [Plummer's nail](#) refers to the separation of the nail from the nailbed which occurs in [thyrotoxicosis](#) and [psoriatic arthritis](#).

Personal life

He had a wife, Daisy, and two adopted children, Robert and Gertrude. Henry Plummer's younger brother, Dr. William Albert Plummer, was also a prominent Mayo physician. The two Plummer brothers represented the next generation of medical practitioner, and helped usher in the modern medical age with innovations such as the integrated group practice and specialization.

Henry Stanley Plummer

Abstract

Henry Stanley Plummer, whose father was a country physician and whose mother was a schoolteacher, was born in 1874 in Hamilton, a small village twenty miles south of Rochester, Minnesota. While much interested in studying toward the engineering profession,

he later decided on medicine. He graduated from Northwestern University Medical School in 1898, and returned to join his father's practice in Racine, Minnesota, a town near Rochester, where the family had moved in 1893. At this time, Drs. William J. and Charles H. Mayo practiced medicine in Rochester in association with their father, Dr. William Worrall Mayo, and three other physicians. Henry Plummer's father, Dr. Albert Plummer, asked Dr. Will Mayo in 1900 to see a patient in consultation. When Dr. Mayo arrived with his horse and buggy at his destination, the elder Doctor Plummer was ill; so he asked his son to accompany Dr. Mayo to the patient's home. Henry carried his microscope, and on the way he conversed about the blood and its diseases. After he arrived, he made smears of the patient's blood, and showed that the patient had leukemia. He also made smears of the hired man's blood to demonstrate the marked differences between the normal blood and that of the patient. Dr. Mayo was greatly impressed by the young physician's brilliance and scientific approach to medical problems. When he returned home, he suggested to his brother that they invite Henry to join their association, which Dr. Plummer did, soon thereafter.

Henry Stanley Plummer

Born 1874-03-03

Died 1937

Related eponyms

- [Plummer treatment](#)
- [Plummer's adenoma](#)
- [Plummer's disease](#)
- [Plummer's nail](#)
- [Plummer's sign](#)
- [Plummer-Vinson syndrome](#)

American internist and endocrinologist, born March 3, 1874, Hamilton, Minnesota; died 1937. According to some writers, Plummer died in 1936. Can you help?

Biography of Henry Stanley Plummer

Henry Stanley Plummer graduated M.D. from North-Western University in 1898. He practised with his father in Racine, Minnesota, for a period before he joined the Mayo Clinic in 1901. He later became head of the internal department of the Mayo Clinic and professor at the Medical School of Minnesota.

Plummer-Vinson- (US) Patterson-Brown-Kelly syndrome (UK): A syndrome characterized by an iron deficiency anemia, dysphagia, and glossitis. The dysphagia is from esophageal webs and motility problems.

Of the intriguing, accomplished, innovative pioneers in American medicine, none has remained less heralded than **Henry Stanley Plummer**, the "undisputed leader of Mayo's diagnosticians," and one of the Mayo Clinic's founding members. Any visitor to Rochester, Minnesota will immediately note the 1924 iconic building bearing Plummer's name that defines the city's landscape. The building was not only an artistic masterpiece but a model of efficiency and innovation in healthcare, introducing a dossier medical charting system centrally maintained, a pneumatic tube and conveyor system, and lab and x-ray departments situated in the same area to promote patient flow. The underground "subway" system connecting the clinic buildings was his idea. Having received his medical degree in 1898 from Northwestern, he was hired by the Mayo brothers in 1901. Dr. Will Mayo claimed "hiring Plummer was the best day's work I ever did." He had an engineering background and was known to depart the clinic, run home to his workbench, fashion a device to solve

whatever medical problem had presented itself and dash back to the clinic to apply his invention. He really wanted to be an engineer but his father talked him into medical school. An expert on the thyroid, Plummer considered himself foremost an endocrinologist, (remember Plummer's nails associated with thyrotoxicosis), and in 1922, popularized using Lugol's solution to treat thyroid crisis, decreasing mortality from 4% to less than 1%. He was essentially the first internist hired by the Mayo brothers and was assigned to address the problems of the esophagus, thus his eventual association with the **Plummer-Vinson Syndrome**. Eccentric, he was known to wander away mid-conversation, reappear days or weeks later and resume the conversation just where he had left it. His colleagues thought this behavior represented his ability for unusually intense concentration as he contemplated a problem. A colleague of Plummer's, known for his skill with the bronchoscope, was Mayo Clinic surgeon Porter Paisley **Vinson**, MD. Plummer's fascinating life is chronicled by F. A. Willius in the book, [Henry Stanley Plummer: A Diversified Genius](#) (1961).

The **Plummer House** is the former residence of [Dr. Henry Stanley Plummer](#) and Daisy Berkman Plummer. Located in [Rochester, Minnesota](#) and originally called *Quarry Hill*, the [English Tudor](#) mansion stood on a 65-acre (26 ha) estate which included a [greenhouse](#), [water tower](#), garage, and [gazebo](#). The house is also called **Henry S. Plummer House**.



The water tower on the estate.

Dr. Plummer, a Mayo Clinic partner and founder, worked very closely with Ellerby and Round, the architects of record, on the design of the house. The house includes many innovations that were quite novel for their time, including a central vacuum system, underground sprinkler system, intercommunications system, [dumbwaiter](#), electricity and gas lighting, the first gas furnace in the city, garage door openers, heated pool, water tower, and two underground caves going into the house and the water tower. The 5 story home is over 300 feet (91 m) long, with 49 rooms including 10 bathrooms, 9 bedrooms and 5 fireplaces.

After the death of Dr. Plummer in [1936](#), his wife, Daisy Berkman Plummer, and their two children, continued to live in the home until [1969](#). In 1971, Daisy Plummer and family gave the house with all its furnishings to the Rochester Art Center with the understanding that it would be operated as a Center for the Arts. Daisy Plummer envisioned her home to be used for music recitals and dance performances, as well as a setting for artist to create and show their work. This unique and generous gift, along with a small endowment, was a legacy of the generous spirit of the Plummer family. The Plummer House was added to the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in [1975](#).

Today, [Rochester Park and Rec](#) maintains the building, and 11 acres (4.5 ha) of original estate, as a private rental facility. In the summer, the beautiful gardens make the Plummer House a popular venue for weddings. Visible from much of south west Rochester, the Plummer House and its water tower mark the summit of a Rochester neighborhood nicknamed [Pill Hill](#), so called because it typically houses many [Mayo](#) doctors.

Plummer Library

The Plummer Library on the Mayo Clinic Rochester campus serves as the central library for the Mayo Library System and occupies the uppermost floors (11-17) in an historic 1928 building. The Plummer Building has retained its geographic centrality to Mayo Clinic patient care, research, and education operations. In 2007, a renovation of the two main floors of this library was completed. The main goal of the renovation was to increase learning and shared common spaces in this facility by transferring lesser used archival bound journal volumes to remote storage in climate-controlled warehouse space in Rochester and to the

Minnesota Library Access Center located in specially constructed and climate-controlled limestone caverns beneath the West Campus of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. The transfer of bound journal volumes to remote storage (now serviced through electronic document delivery) allowed the creation of new shared learning spaces including a combined retail professional bookstore and café with large-screen televisions, new group study rooms, increased book and monograph storage, soft-seating areas, a redesigned and enlarged technical processing office area, and relocation of research librarian offices to a more visible and convenient location for users.

Plummer House History & Facts

History

In 1917 Dr. Henry S. Plummer and his wife Daisy, began construction of "Quarry Hill" later to be known as the Plummer House. Dr. Plummer personally formulated the plans for the house which included many innovations that were far advanced for that day and age.

In 1924 the 65 acre estate consisted of the house, greenhouse, water tower, garage and gazebo. Today 11 acres remain and are maintained by the Rochester Park and Recreation Department.

In 1901 Dr. Mayo asked Dr. Plummer to join the Mayo Clinic staff. This relationship was to last for the next 35 years to the mutual benefit of both parties. Dr. Plummer is given credit for many innovative ideas that were implemented during his tenure. Among the most outstanding was his invention of the pneumatic tube, the communication system, and record keeping system.

Daisy Plummer, a gifted musician and friend to all, was a remarkable individual in her own right. A concert pianist and patron of the arts, she was very fond of promoting cultural activities in the city.

With Dr. Plummer's death in 1936, Daisy Plummer and family continued to live at the Plummer House until 1969. At that time the house and grounds were given to the Art Center for all to use and enjoy. Three years later the house and grounds were turned over to the Park and Recreation Department.

Dr. Plummer, once described as "the diversified genius" and Daisy "a patron of the arts" built a home that was always open to friends and relatives. Today this memory lives on at the Plummer House of the Arts.

Facts

- Dr. Plummer began working at the Mayo Clinic in 1901 and was there until his death in 1936. He was a physician, architect, tool and die maker and inventor. He set up the record keeping system at the Mayo clinic, designed many buildings and invented the pneumatic tube.
- Daisy Plummer was a gifted musician. Her mother's maiden name was Mayo. daisy lived at the Plummer House until 1969. She and Dr. Plummer had two adopted children, Robert and Gertrude.
- The house is an English Tudor Mansion and was constructed between 1917 and 1924. The roof is made entirely of slate. Today the house, water tower and grounds occupy 11 acres. The furniture in the house is all original.
- There are two caves on the property, one going into the house and the other under the water tower.
- The house has 49 rooms, 10 bathrooms, 9 bedrooms, 5 fireplaces.
- The house is over 300' long and is 5 stories high
- Innovative features that were built into the house included: central vacuum system, underground sprinkler system, inter-communications system, security system, dumb waiter, electricity and gas lighting, first gas furnace in the city, garage door openers, heated pool, water tower, and many other special features.
- When the house was built the property included 65 acres.
- Twenty-five percent of exterior stone was mined from the property.

Plummer House of the Arts' Gardens

Street Address:

1091 Plummer Lane S.W.
Rochester , MN 55902

Phone Number:

507 281-6160

Fax Number:

507 281-6165

Website: [Plummer House Gardens](#)

Run by:

Rochester Parks and Recreation

Date Established:

1924

Size:

11 acres

Cost:

No admission fee for gardens
Fee for house tours

Peak Season:

Summer

Extras:

Free parking near house
Weddings can be scheduled in the gardens
Limited accessibility

Comments:

The Plummer House Gardens are lovely, quiet, multi-level gardens surrounding a large and elegant home on a bluff. In 1917, Dr. Henry S. Plummer and his wife Daisy (a Mayo relative), began building this residence they called Quarry Hill. Dr. Plummer designed the house and included many innovations - an underground sprinkler system, dumb waiters, a security system, intercom, garage door openers and the first gas furnace in Rochester. The five-story, 300-foot long Tudor style house has 49 rooms and five fireplaces. The roof is slate and 25% of the stone used to build the exterior was excavated on site. The house was completed in 1924. In 1935, Dr. Plummer died having worked for the Mayo Clinic since 1901. His widow gave the house to the Rochester Art Center in 1969 and, in 1972, the house and grounds were turned over to Rochester's Park and Recreation Department. The immediate 11 acres surrounding the house are beautifully landscaped and maintained. There is a lower garden level with an expanse of lawn, with pools and fountains at each end. This lower lawn area is ringed with unusual, mature trees (hornbeam, hemlock and magnolia) and deep perennial beds under these trees further enhance the garden space. The walkway to the lower garden and the gardens directly behind the house, contain hole-filled rocks planted with hostas and

perennials. There are also remnants of old cold-frames planted with perennials, near the picturesque water tower. Past the house on an upper lawn are beautiful stands of mature white pines, junipers, yews and red cedar. There is some plant signage.

The Plummer Building, part of the Mayo Clinic building, is named after physician, scientist, and engineer Dr. Henry S. Plummer, whose time covered Mayo's formative years starting from 1900 until the year of his death, 1936. He had essential contributions to the early success and development of Mayo.

The building bearing his name began its construction in August 1926. Playing a key role in the building's architectural design, Dr. Plummer answered the need for a design that allows medical specialists to work independently and as a team. In the interior, his compassionate spirit is reflected through carvings, rich shades of marbles, custom carpeting, hardwood panels, and beautiful moldings. Mythological and allegorical themes adorn the exterior through the carvings focusing on medicine, Minnesota, America, and Rochester on the two lower floors of the building.

Take a step back in time to the bustling days of 1928 when the Plummer Building first opened its doors as the "new" Mayo Clinic Building. Today, we can still experience a bit of the setting by visiting the Historical Suite on the third floor of the building.

Upon entering the suite, one sees photographs of friends and professional colleagues of the Mayo brothers hanging on the walls. The brothers traveled extensively throughout the world learning from other physicians.

The academic regalia and honorary degrees and awards of the Mayo brothers' that are on display are a testament to their accomplishments. When one views the medical and surgical instruments of the 19th century, one appreciates the advances made in medicine. Seeing the restored offices of Drs. Will and Charlie Mayo and the Board of Governors room allows one to feel the sense of Mayo's rich culture and heritage.



Dr. W.J. Mayo's Last Office

The Mayo's legacy lives on and is an inspiration to all who work here at Mayo Clinic. Their hard work and dedication to their patients and their fostering education and research as part of Mayo's mission has not changed over the years.

Mayo Clinic continues to provide the best care to every patient every day through integrated clinical practice, education and research. The foundation was set over a century ago and continues to be built upon today.

The Plummer Building in Rochester, Minnesota is one of the many architecturally significant buildings on the Mayo Clinic campus. This new "Mayo Clinic" building, opened in 1927, added much needed space to the ever expanding Mayo practice. The architect of record is Ellerbe & Co. It was the third building designed by the firm for the Mayo Clinic. The Mayo Clinic Buildings were listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic

Places in 1969, and the Plummer Building was further designated as U.S. National Historic Landmark a week later, designated as Mayo Clinic Building.

Plummer Building Bronze Doors: Created by Charles (Carlo) Brioschi

- [Other Sections](#)▼

- [References](#) Charles (Carlo) Brioschi (1879-1941) was born in Milan, Italy, and received his education at the Brera School of Art in Milan, where he specialized in architecture and sculpture. He immigrated to the United States in 1899 and moved to the Minneapolis-St Paul, MN, area in 1909. His employer's company was retained by Ellerbe & Company, St Paul, the architectural firm charged with designing and constructing the Plummer Building. In a letter¹ dated July 28, 1961, Brioschi's son noted that Brioschi created many of the designs and models for the bronze doors while hospitalized at the Kahler Hospital in Rochester, MN.

Each door weighs 4000 lb, stands 16 ft high, and is 5½ in thick. The doors consist of forty-two 18 × 21-in panels. Six repeating symbolic panels and 2 repeating ornamental patterns are interspersed throughout each door. The symbolic panels show a woman kneeling next to her child to represent maternity and the home, a [figure](#) holding an overflowing cornucopia and a shock of wheat to represent agriculture, a [figure](#) with a paint palette and brushes to represent the fine arts, a [figure](#) with a lamp and scroll to represent education, and a [figure](#) with a hook and crane to represent the mechanical arts. The ornamental panels have a central button surrounded by floral patterns and smaller etchings of flora and fauna (eg, squirrels, pinecones) indigenous to Minnesota. The central buttons depict either a turkey or the face of a Native American.

The intent of the original designers was that these doors would be closed at the end of each clinic business day. However, the closing of the doors has instead become a memorial to important historical events or a tribute to the memory of a famous or influential person. Some events that have received this honor include the deaths of Drs William J. and Charles H. Mayo (1939), the assassination of President John F. Kennedy (1963), and most recently, in commemoration of the victims of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

The building is named for Dr. Henry Plummer, a widely-regarded as the Architect of the Mayo Group Practice. He joined the Mayo in 1901 and designed many of the systems that gave rise to the group practice concept that has become so successful. The main library reading room on the 12th floor is called Mayo Hall. Dr. Plummer selected sixty prominent physicians and scientists to be memorialized with their names engraved in the room's ceiling beams. The Plummer Building was the tallest building in Rochester from 1929 until completion of the [Gonda Building](#) in 2001. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. The first two stories of the building are made of limestone, while the upper ones are made of brick with terra cotta trim. The tower holds a 56-bell carillon, enlarged in 1977 from the original 23-bell carillon dedicated on 16 September 1928.