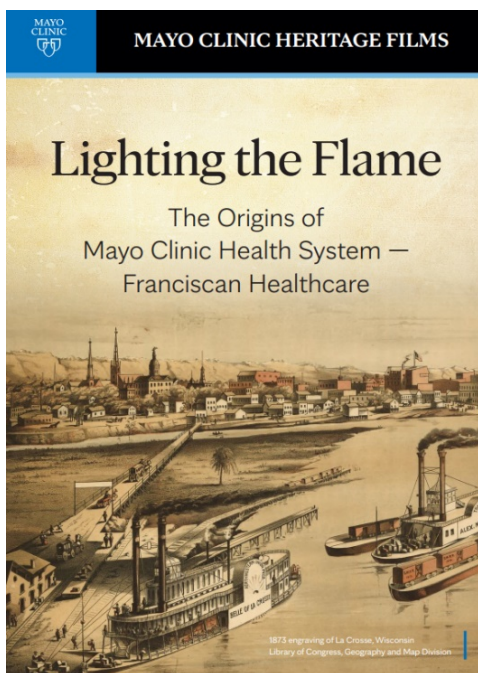




Mayo Clinic Heritage Films Discussion Guide

Lighting the Flame: The Origins of Mayo Clinic Health System – Franciscan Healthcare



In the late 19th century, the river town of La Crosse, Wisconsin, became a center of medical excellence, home to St. Francis Hospital, founded by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in 1883. In the 1920s, the physician brothers Archibald and George Skemp opened a clinic nearby. Together, they provided skillful, compassionate care to generations of patients in La Crosse and the surrounding area.

Seventy miles to the west, another congregation of Franciscan sisters and another pair of physician brothers were building the institution known to the world as Mayo Clinic.

This film tells the story of the founding of these three organizations, born in the spirit of faith and hope, and how their shared values brought them together and carried them into the 21st century.

Discussion Questions

1. When the sisters from Bavaria left the convent, the young Rose Francois stayed, despite her family telling her to come home. When have you decided to persevere when others advised you to quit? How is your life different as a result?

2. The sisters made several dramatic and risky changes in their early history, relocating the convent twice and pursuing new missions in education and health care. When have you been involved in making fundamental changes in your organization? How did you decide to move forward?
3. What was it about La Crosse that made it possible for the sisters' hospital and the Skemps' clinic to take root and grow?
4. Dr. Archie Skemp was a generalist, doing everything from performing surgery in the hospital to delivering babies at home. What values did he demonstrate in his approach to medicine that are still relevant in today's more specialized era?
5. What do you think was "in the DNA" of St. Francis Hospital, Skemp Clinic and Mayo Clinic that made it possible for them to come together in the 1990s?
6. What do organizations give up when they join together and what do they gain?
7. When two organizations join, what can make it a positive experience for the people from both?
8. The sisters have practiced Perpetual Adoration since 1878 and Mayo Clinic still follows the primary value that Dr. William J. Mayo first stated in 1910: the needs of the patient come first. How do you think having enduring principles and practices help individuals and organizations respond to challenges and changing times?