

Mary Mayo was born on a farm near Battle Creek, Michigan. After graduating high school she became a district school teacher and married Civil War veteran Perry Mayo. The two would have a daughter and a son. She wished for her daughter to attend a collegiate institution, but she saw a lack of available education for her daughter at Michigan Agricultural College (MAC). During this time, Mayo became active in an organization called "The Grange." In this organization, women were admitted as equals to men and therefore became a salvation and outlet of companionship for many farm women. Throughout her speeches and lectures with this group, she began to advocate for the creation of a women's course and the building of a women's dormitory at MAC. She believed that the current curriculum offered little to farm women and even less to city women. Mayo's persistence in pushing for a woman's program was heard. In 1896 the women's course was officially created and Morrill Hall became the new Women's Building. In 1931, Mayo Hall was built as a dormitory building. It is the oldest dormitory on campus still used for its original purpose.