

IU Sundial

Submitted by Carol Seaman

Cemeteries, columbaria and other final resting places likely contain love stories that we will never know. That is not the case with the IU Sundial currently located on the edge of “Dunn’s Woods”, the heart of the original IU campus adjacent to Maxwell Hall, in Bloomington Township.[1] The love story concerns Otto and Mathilda Klopsch, members of the Indiana University Class of 1896, who first met at the sundial when it was located at the old IU campus located at Seminary Square at Second and College Avenue.

According to the IU Archives in *Bloggling Hoosier History*, after 37 years of marriage, Mathilda died in 1933 and her loving husband, Otto, a couple years after and it was their son Otto, Jr. who asked IU President William Lowe Bryan in 1935 if he could scatter the ashes of his parents at the sundial where they first met.[2] The permission was granted and a bronze plaque was allowed, as well. The plaque, which exists today, reads:

Mathilda Zwicker Klopsch
Otto Paul Klopsch
Class of 1896
They met at this sundial
when classmates.
Their ashes rest here
together until eternity.

The urn used to carry the lovers’ ashes to the sundial is still on display in the reading room of the IU Archives.

The North American Sundial Society features the IU Sundial in its Sundial Registry as Sundial 336. This registry entry found at <http://sundials.org/index.php/component/sundials/onedial/336> includes photos, location and the following description:

"A 24 inch octagonal horizontal dial probably made of marble. The dial is plain, with Roman numerals at the end of hour lines. The gnomon is a simple open triangle of well aged (sic) brass. The base is an octagonal pillar surrounded by flowers."

The dial was struck by a falling tree in spring 2011. The gnomon style (the piece of a sundial that casts a shadow indicating the time) is broken and bent and the support has several large cracks. The falling tree also damaged the surrounding fence. While technically not a cemetery, this sundial does memorialize the lives of Otto and Mathilda Klopsch marks the location of the scattering of their remains.

[1] “The Woodland Campus: Indiana University-Bloomington: A Historic Walking Tour”, <https://spea.indiana.edu/doc/about/woodland.pdf>.

[2] “Still Together: The Love Story of Otto and Mathilda Klopsch,” Indiana University Archives, *Blogging Hoosier History*, Posted on February 14, 2012 by Shannon Larson. <https://blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/iubarchives/2012//01/14/klopsch>