

A history of Minns Garden

The Minns garden is named for former Professor of herbaceous plants, Lua A. Minns, who designed and tended the garden in the 1920s as a practice ground for her students to do hands-on gardening work.

The original garden was established in 1915 by the then Dean of the College of Agriculture, Liberty Hyde Bailey, at the corner of Garden Avenue and Tower Road. This site was regarded as temporary since the site was to be used for building purposes (Bailey Plaza and Malott Hall stand today).

Lua Minns entered Cornell University in the fall of 1910 and graduated in 1914. The following year she became an instructor in the Floriculture Department of the Agriculture College.

Following Lua Minns retirement and subsequent death in 1935, the President of Cornell University, Livingston Farrand and Mrs. Farrand, Sigma Delta Epsilon, Alpha Chapter, a national organization for Graduate Women in Science, The Garden Club of Ithaca and other friends, made a movement to establish a memorial in her name. The garden to which she had devoted her energies became the Lua A. Minns Memorial Garden as a permanent mark of the esteem and affection with which she was held. A bronze sundial was placed in the center of the garden with the inscription "In Memory of Lua A. Minns".

After her death, the garden was continued as an object-lesson garden under various successive teachers and College gardeners. Professor Robert E. Lee (May 1911 – July 1999) supervised the garden starting in 1946 until he retired in 1967.

The garden was moved in 1960 to its present location on tower Road. The bed arrangement was designed by Professor Emeritus Robert J. Scannell, Landscape Architecture. It was then maintained by FOH with support of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Every spring staff from the Kenneth Post Lab as well as a number of Horticultural Intern Students initiated the beginning of the gardening season by spring clean-up and preparing a variety of annuals for use in the garden for the summer display. They helped with the removal of the tulip bulbs and pansies in the planting of the annual plantings. Professor Robert Mower (faculty 1961 – 2000) supervised the maintenance of the garden from 1967 to 2000. Nina Bassuk, Department of Horticulture currently supervises the garden (2009).