

For Immediate Release

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YSU restores ‘Old Stone Bridge’ campus landmark

Youngstown State University students can again “Meet at the Old Stone Bridge.”

The stately, 26-foot-long bridge, a campus focal point before it was nearly covered with dirt about 40 years ago, is being unearthed this month as part of YSU’s upcoming centennial celebration.

“I’ve talked to couples who were engaged on this bridge, who met friends on the bridge and who walked across the bridge on their way to Jones Hall for commencement,” said Paul McFadden, YSU’s chief development officer.

“It is part of YSU’s forgotten history, and it’s only appropriate that we try to return it to its original grandeur and share it with today’s generation of students, faculty, staff and friends of the university.”

John White, professor emeritus of anthropology and sociology, is leading a team of about a dozen volunteers – including about five YSU students – to carefully uncover the bridge.

“This is the best kept secret on campus,” White said. “Now, when people ask, ‘Do you know where the old stone bridge is?’ Well, now everyone will know.”

The bridge is located in the tranquil, little-traveled area between Maag Library and Wick Avenue on the YSU campus. It was once part of the driveway to the Henry C. Wick Mansion on Wick Avenue and pre-dates Jones Hall, which was built in 1931 on the corner of Wick and Lincoln avenues.

Photographs in YSU yearbooks from the 1930s through 1950s show students sitting and walking across the small arch bridge, and one photo shows the members of the class of 1942 posed in front of the quaint structure.

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YSU Old Stone Bridge/Add 1

Sometime in the 1960s, the bottom portion of the bridge was filled in with dirt, leaving only a few inches of the stone top above ground.

In the years since, the bridge has been mostly forgotten, yet McFadden said he has met many alums nationwide over the past several years who have inquired about the bridge.

“I’d tell them that I’ve been on this campus since 1979, and I’ve never seen any old stone bridge,” he said. “I didn’t know what they were talking about.”

Then, one day about four years ago, McFadden was jogging along Wick Avenue, ventured into the area just east of Maag Library and ran across the stone top of the bridge.

“I stopped in my tracks and said, ‘Hey, this is it. This is the bridge,’” he said.

He contacted John White, who set up the excavation crew.

YSU President David C. Sweet said the bridge will become one of the symbolic focal points in the build up to the university’s centennial celebration in 2008.

“As YSU prepares to bridge another century, it’s only appropriate that we work to restore and celebrate this campus landmark,” Sweet said.

“Like YSU itself, the bridge represents tradition and strength. With its revival, the bridge allows us to reflect on the university’s proud past and look forward to a promising future.”