

Malta Boat Club

Rowing at New York Institute for the
Education of the Blind

Minutes of the November 1954 Meeting.

The regular meeting of the Malta Boat Club opened at the Boat House on Tuesday, November 9, 1954, President McKissock presiding.

Treasurer's and Secretary's reports accepted.

Jim McKissock announced the "objective" program for the various committees of the Club. All objectives would be periodically posted on a signpost along with accomplishments.

Fred Symes in his Captain's report advised the 8-oared shell "Mary" had been donated to the New York School of the Blind and they had duly made pickup of the shell at our club house. Four work boats have been set aside for complete overhaul and repair by Wayne Neal. Pat Petta, supplementing the Captain's report announced the Schuylkill Navy Basketball League would start December 6th. Pat Petta was given authority to decide on shirts after consulting with League Chairman Phil Daly. Also supplementing the Captain's Report, Joe Scanlin on Cross County advised the various representatives had met to decide on who was and was not eligible to run in the Annual Schuylkill Navy Run.

Bill Bookhamer for the House Committee advised that Al Wilson had done some fine work in making the house presentable. Bill warned on the danger in tampering with the automatic gas hot water heater and the recent accident to the same. The house damage inflicted by "Hazel" has been reported to the insurance company. The various roof repairmen are too busy at the present time to do the required repairs. Financial report of House Committee furnished at this time.

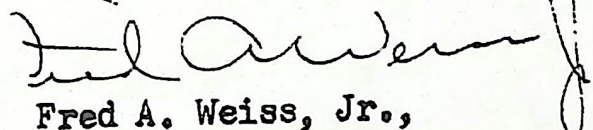
Motion made and carried that Mr. J. R. W. Barrette be made an active member of the Club.

Reporting on the Junior Members activities as outlined by Bob Donohue, suggestion was made that all requests be routed to the proper Club Committee.

Under Entertainment, Chairman Piechoski reported a net profit on the Halloween Hop of \$288.84. A proposal was made a New Year's Party be held. Entertainment Committee will meet to determine the feasibility of the same.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,


Fred A. Weiss, Jr.,
Secretary

NEW YORK INSTITUTE FOR THE
EDUCATION OF THE BLIND
599 PELHAM PARKWAY
NEW YORK 67, N. Y.

Sept. 11, 1954

Mr. John C. Bratten
336 East Meehan Avenue
Philadelphia 19, Penna.

Dear Jack:

This is our fifth year of rowing. Had 5 races last spring. Races were against Hun School, St. Andrew's School, Poughkeepsie H.S., Kent School, and Northwood School. Three races were against crews in a four and two races in an eight.

Mr. Seth W. Hoard, our Coxswain was down to see you and your Club last Easter. I believe you mentioned that you wanted to donate an eight oared shell to us. If that offer still holds true, we would be very much interested in the proposition.

Hope you had a nice summer.

We plan to begin fall rowing next week.

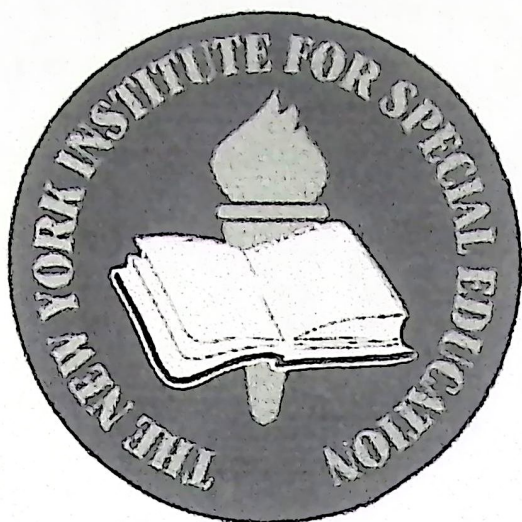
Cordially yours

J. Hordines
Johnnie Hordines
Athletic Director & Crew Coach

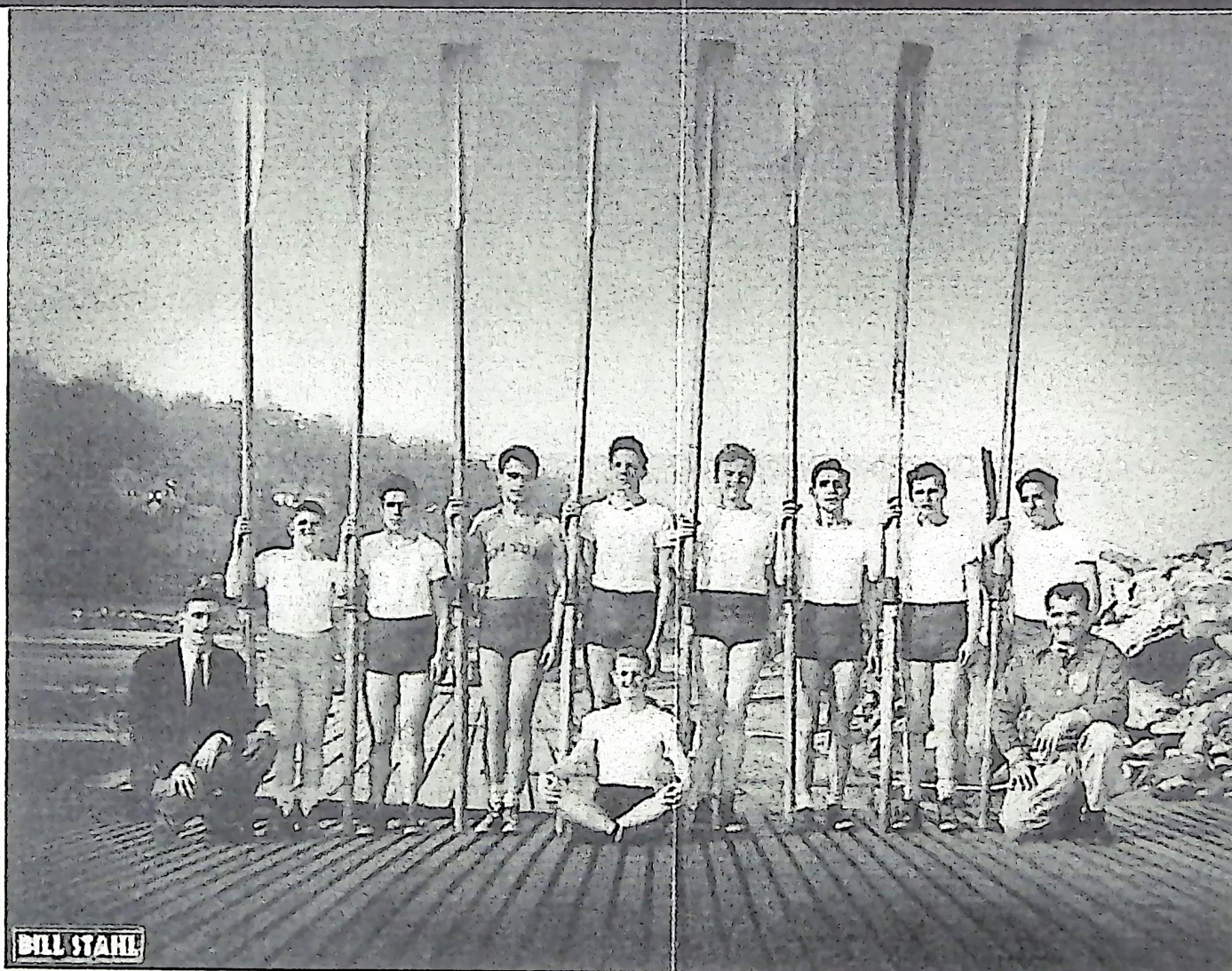
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ROWING AT THE NEW YORK INSTITUTE FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND 1950-1972



By Seth W. Hoard,
Coach, 1956-1973

NYISE Museum and Archive Publication

2010



NYISE Museum and Archive

The New York Institute for Special Education (NYISE) is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonsectarian educational facility which provides quality programs for children who are blind or visually disabled, emotionally and learning disabled and preschoolers who are developmentally delayed.

The Institute was founded in 1831 and the physical fitness of our students has always been important to our mission to provide excellent educational programs with appropriate related services to all students in order that they may become successful contributing members of society.

This essay, written by Coach Seth Weeks Hoard around 1973, presents the school's efforts with a NYI Rowing Club that lasted over 23 years. Coach Hoard was a pioneer in the sport of rowing when he introduced it to the Institute. After retiring, he served as an assistant coach at Columbia University, Fordham University, the Empire State Rowing Association and other local rowing clubs in the New York metropolitan area. He died at the age of 98.

Today sports are still an important activity for the students. The Schermerhorn program competes in wrestling, track and field, swimming, bowling and goalball.

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*Founded in 1831 as
The New York Institute for the
Education of the Blind*

**ROWING AT THE NEW YORK INSTITUTE
FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND
1950-1972**

**By
Seth W. Hoard, Coach, 1956-1973**

Although work on the water did not begin until the Spring of 1951, a rowing program at the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind had been planned early in the Fall of 1950. Dr. M.E. Frampton, the Principal, and Paul Mitchell, the Assistant Principal, asked John Hordines, who had recently been appointed Director of Physical Education, to introduce a new and exciting sport for the blind. Mr. Hordines was an alumnus of Syracuse University which had once been famous for its rowing, so he suggested crew. Rowing is an ideal sport for the blind since it depends upon muscular memory rather than vision. The only adaptation necessary is the use of a sighted coxswain.

A school for the blind in England offered a rowing program some decades earlier, as the former Principal Edward M. Van Cleve, reported after a trip to Europe in 1930. Rowing for the blind, however, had received little publicity. In America, wrestling and a modified form of track were the popular competitive sports at the schools for the blind in Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Hartford, Batavia and New York. Charles Courtney, the famous coach at Cornell, included a few blind oarsmen in his crew at the turn of the century, but the New York Institute has been the only school for the blind in America to include crew as a team sport in its program of athletics.

In the Fall of 1950, the Institute had no boats, no boat house, and no equipment at all for rowing. It required a great deal of persuasion and unremitting effort to set up the sport, but Mr. Hordines rose to the occasion. He persuaded the crew coach at Cornell to donate two training gigs, constructed for Coach Courtney around 1900. In November 1950, Mr. Hordines and some of the maintenance staff took the Institute's truck up to Ithaca to transport the boats. The gigs were in lamentable condition, but during the winter the school carpenter did an excellent job in reconstructing them. The hulls were carefully patched and varnished, and by

spring they looked almost new. Dr. Frampton named the heavier boat the "Louis Braille", the lighter one, the "Helen Keller". Walter Raney, Head Coach of Rowing at Columbia, was prevailed upon to allow the Institute to use the rowing installations at Baker Field. Mr. Raney also arranged for one of his former oarsmen, Henry Rosette, a student at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons, to help with the coaching and supervise the program.

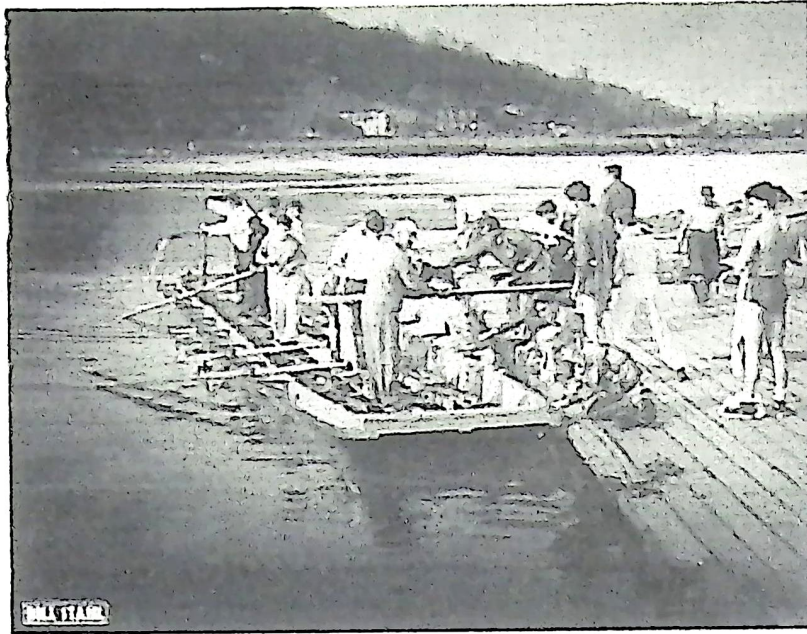
Early in April 1951, immediately after the Easter recess, work began on the water. The school bus was used to transport the blind students to Baker Field for practice, under the direction of Mr. Rosette, in the old Columbia training barge, affectionately called "Nero" or "Cleopatra" by the collegians. This unwieldy craft had eight sliding seats on each side, with an aisle between, so that the coach could walk back and forth, cracking the whip, so to speak, as in the ancient Greek and Roman warships.



Careening about the Spuyten Duyvil in this cumbersome barge, with ten or twelve blind youths tugging at the sweeps, was an exciting adventure. It had a huge rudder with a wide handle, and one needed to be a good pilot to nudge it safely into the dock. After three weeks' training in the "Cleopatra", the crew was ready to try out the gigs. These moved with far greater speed and maneuverability than the barge and permitted longer workouts on the Harlem River.

When the crew season at Columbia came to an end, the Institute was obliged to seek more permanent quarters. Housing for the Institute's equipment was provided temporarily by the Nonpareil Rowing Club at the foot of Dyckman Street and the Harlem River Drive. This club had been founded in 1874, but its rowing activities were in decline. However, it maintained an excellent dock, and was occasionally represented by scullers in the national regattas. Several of its members rowed regularly for recreation and exercise. Originally the Nonpareil

boat house had belonged to Columbia University; it was well maintained and preserved many interesting features of an earlier era. In May the Institute took its gigs, its oars, which had been donated by Boston University, and its rented launch, and moved down river.



On May 30, 1951 the Nonpareil Rowing Club was the host for the New York Rowing Association's annual Memorial Day regatta, sponsored by the local rowing clubs and Columbia University. This year it featured an exhibition race between the Varsity and Junior Varsity crews of the New York Institute for the Blind. The Varsity rowed in the "Louis Braille", and the Junior Varsity in the "Helen Keller." The Varsity was the

favorite boat, but one of their oarsmen caught a "crab", so the Junior Varsity gleefully shot over the finish line more than a boat length ahead and collected the trophies. This race concluded the first rowing season at the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind.

Late in June the crew moved once again-this time to the Viking Rowing Club, next door to the Nonpareil. The boat house had once belonged to the fashionable Union Boat Club and had been quite elegant in the last quarter of the nineteenth century but had since fallen into disrepair. However, the Institute had much greater freedom to build its program here than at Baker Field or at Nonpareil. The Institute kept the dock in repair and contributed to the general maintenance. Dr. Frampton's son-in-law donated his fishing boat, and the Institute no longer had to rent a coaching launch.

From this beginning, the fortunes of the crew went through four main cycles: 1950- 1955; 1955-1961; 1961-1968; 1968-1972.

From 1951, through the Spring of 1955, Mr. Hordines continued as coach, and was most active in acquiring equipment and expanding the program. When the crew moved to the Viking boat house, Nonpareil gave us a gig, which the school carpenter later converted into a shell. Walter Sener and Bruno Uthgenannt, officers of the Viking Rowing Club, allowed the Institute to use their equipment most generously: gigs, training boats, four oared shells, and oars were always available when needed.

During this period, the Institute crew participated in many regattas. There were races with St. Andrews at Middletown, Delaware; Hun School at Princeton, New Jersey; Poughkeepsie High School on the historic Mid-Hudson course; Belleville-Nutley High Schools in Belleville, New Jersey; Kent School in Connecticut. One year the Northwood School at Lake Placid, New York, sent a crew down to compete with the Institute on the Harlem, and the next year the Institute crew journeyed northward to race on Lake Placid.

In 1954, Dr. Parsons, a member of the Board of Managers of the Institute, donated money to purchase a four-oared shell from the Vesper Boat Club in Philadelphia. This boat had been imported from Spain. It was a very fast boat, but lightly constructed. Unsuitable for heavy training, it soon fell into disrepair. In 1953, and again in 1954, the Institute entered a four in the National Schoolboy Regatta held annually on the Schuylkill in Philadelphia.

In these regattas the Institute crew was at a severe disadvantage. Because of schedule conflicts, the crew could practice only three days a week-Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and an occasional Friday when the crew stayed over for a regatta. All our

opponents, especially those from preparatory schools, regularly practiced five and often six days a week. Very infrequently the Institute did win a race: in 1952 against a crew composed of Columbia's lightweight spares, and in 1953 against a novice four from the Lone Star Boat Club.

The value of the program could hardly be measured by the number of victories won; but viewed as an educational experience, its benefits were many. It afforded blind boys a chance to travel widely up and down the Eastern seaboard, meet with their peers in famous preparatory schools, and even in a great metropolis enjoy a rugged life out-of-doors braving the winds and tides of the Harlem and the Hudson. It gave them a chance to learn something about the maintenance of the boats and the club house. Membership in the crew was a distinct asset when applying for admission to college. Some of our oarsmen were accepted at Syracuse University, at St. Lawrence College, Colgate, Fordham, and Harvard.

Mr. Hordines sought to interest as many of the faculty, scholarship students, and visitors as possible in rowing for the blind. He made efforts to introduce the sport at other schools for the blind so that the Institute crew would have more equal competition, but unfortunately met with little success. Mr. Hordines left the Institute in 1955. Two faculty members, Kenneth Riley, the school psychologist, and Seth W. Hoard, a member of the academic faculty, were selected to carry on the program. Mr. Riley moved to West Virginia in 1956, but Mr. Hoard continued coaching until he retired in 1973.

The second phase in the history of rowing at the Institute is included between the years 1955-1961. During this period, the Institute was able to boat three fours simultaneously at a single practice, and hired James Dean, a student of Tolentine Academy in the Bronx, to act as crew assistant and coxswain. Dean remained in the program until 1964.

In 1956, good luck provided the crew with some excellent coaching. Returning from practice one afternoon early in the season, a tall stranger stood waiting for us on the dock. He announced that his name was Vincent McGee from the West Side Rowing Club at Buffalo, New York, and explained that he had been searching for the New York Institute's crew. It turned out that Mr. McGee was an immigration officer on the Niagara Frontier and had been assigned six weeks duty in New York harbor. Since his work was over at four o'clock in the afternoon, he said he would be delighted to come up to the Harlem and help with the program. This generous offer was accepted immediately, and for the next month and a half Mr. McGee took command of the coaching launch, providing us with good training and encouragement.

Shortly after the appearance of Mr. McGee we were notified that a new Pocock four had been delivered to the M.I.T. boat house in Boston and would we please come up and collect it. The boat had been ordered the previous Fall and we had been waiting eagerly for this new addition to our navy. Mr. Riley, Mr. Hoard and the crew went up to Boston in the school bus, stayed overnight at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, and early one cold and windy April morning loaded the shell on top of the bus and brought it back to New York. Mr. McGee was waiting at the boat house on our return and helped us rig it and attach the fin so we could launch it at practice next day. Since 1956 was an Olympic year, the



boys named the shell, unofficially, the "Olympia I". It was a sturdy craft with beautiful lines and always remained a favorite boat of the Institute oarsmen.

Late in May, 1956, the crew carried their new boat on top of the school bus to Princeton for a race with Hun School. Luck would have it that the Harvard lightweights were racing with Princeton that same afternoon. The

crew was busy, helping to remove the riggers for reloading the boat and gathering

up equipment for the trip back to New York, when another tall stranger approached. He seemed interested in the new shell and the skill with which the blind oarsmen were dismantling the rigging. He identified himself as the lightweight coach from Harvard and explained that he would graduate from Harvard Law School in June, that he was assured of a job with a firm in Wall Street, and that he would like nothing better than to act as coach of the blind crew in the Fall. All this tumbled out so rapidly we were not quite certain that we had heard correctly. Perhaps it was a hallucination! Too good to be true! It seemed rather improbable that we might have the services of a Harvard rowing coach for the asking. The appearance of these tall strangers at opportune moments hinted at supernatural intervention-like the intrigues of the gods who controlled the course of events in the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." Homer would have assured us that these men were Mercury or Apollo in disguise. At any rate, hearty handshakes at departure seemed real enough and the calling card thrust into our hands. The card had the name "Derek Wilde" stamped upon it as well as an address and a telephone number in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

True to his word, Mr. Wilde did come to New York in the Fall and coached the Institute crew for two full years. This was one of the most glamorous episodes in the history of rowing at the Institute. Mr. Wilde gave us Ivy League training, and he himself served as a model of idealistic devotion to the sport. It was he who introduced the phrase, "The religion of rowing."

Previous to 1955, the Fall rowing was very brief. Mr. Hordines coached wrestling as well as crew, and that permitted him, at most, only three weeks of practice on the Harlem in September. Beginning with 1955, however, six to eight weeks were devoted to Fall practice. This was essential in training novices for the Spring regattas and to polish the technique of the veterans. In order to work toward some definite goal, it was necessary to conclude the Fall training with a regatta. Most of the preparatory schools had no Fall season because of the pressure of football, so it was difficult to find crews to row against. In 1955 some Columbia lightweights filled the gap; in 1956 the crew went to Philadelphia to race with St. Joseph's High School. In 1957 we competed with another parochial school on the

Schuylkill, and in 1958 with Haverford Prep. If there were enough oarsmen to fill two fours, we did not travel but held an intramural race on the Harlem.

From 1956 to 1961, the Spring schedule was modified. We no longer went to St. Andrews but continued to race with Hun School. Mr. Wilde's good coaching enabled us to win races with Hun School for two years in succession. Mr. Wilde also suggested that we compete with the Gunnery School at Washington, Connecticut, and twice we raced on Lake Waramaug. In the Spring of 1958 Mr. Wilde took the crew to Cambridge for a race with Browne and Nichols School. The boys found lodging in one of Harvard's "Houses" on the Charles-Winthrop House, to be exact. We ate in nearby restaurants. Mr. Wilde borrowed a Harvard four and received permission from Harvey Love, then the Head Coach, to use the facilities of the Newall boat house. The Institute crew did not win but got a good write-up in the Boston "Globe" next morning.

Twice in this period (1955-61) the Institute entered a four in the Schoolboy Nationals. In 1956, for some reason, the Nationals were held at Poughkeepsie instead of at Philadelphia as usual. The afternoon of the regatta, winds from the Catskills lashed the Hudson into a fury. In the rough water the Institute crew, because they were the better navigators, finished the course ahead of another boat. This was the only occasion that our blind oarsmen gained an advantage over another crew at the Schoolboy Nationals.

We were in Philadelphia for the Nationals in 1958, but this time we went without any illusions-rather as spectators and to mingle with other oarsmen. There was some publicity in the Philadelphia newspapers but we failed to live up to expectations.

One year (perhaps 1958 or 1959), the crew raced Choate School at Wallingford, Connecticut. The Institute oarsmen fared rather badly in this regatta. They rowed out of rhythm and had a tendency to wash out. We never went back. One of the treasures of their boat house caught our fancy, however. This was a magnificent Pocock four with mirror like varnish and hardware flashing in the sun. With incredulity we learned that it had been built in Seattle in 1922. From its

appearance one would have thought that it had just left the shop, although there were details in its construction that proclaimed an earlier era. The staff at Choate must have sanded it down and varnished it twice a year to keep it in such immaculate condition. Perhaps it is still there, unchanged, hoarded like a vintage Rolls-Royce.

In May 1959, at the invitation of the West Side Rowing Club, the Institute crew journeyed to Buffalo to give an exhibition race in fours on the Black Rock course. This was the first of many such journeys; the trip to Buffalo became an annual event. After the race members of the West Side Club took the crews to a nearby park on the waterfront where they broiled steaks to make sandwiches with huge slices of rye bread, and from a large kettle served steaming cups of clam juice, the aroma and savor of which is still vivid after a lapse of more than twenty years. One of the members happened to be the County Park Commissioner and he arranged a guided tour of Niagara Falls for the crew and its coaches. We were given the honor of a police escort, with wailing sirens, for the twenty mile drive from the boathouse to the Falls. Using biblical language to describe our emotions at receiving such princely hospitality, we might have said: "Our cup runeth over."

Visiting such traditional New England preparatory schools as Pomfret, Kent, Brooks School and Chaote was a fascinating experience. It gave one a closer look at the material that supplied the Ivy League, and May was the right time of year to be there. There were hillsides, white with fragrant apple blossoms; elms and maples in the first shimmering green of Spring; there was elegant colonial architecture, red brick with white trimmings, against acres of green lawn. It was a world apart where courtesy and good manners prevailed. We found that "noblesse oblige" had not yet become an empty phrase.

Toward the end of June in 1959, we put two fours together to form an eight for a race on the Hudson with a crew from Poughkeepsie High School. This was an exciting event. We arrived in Poughkeepsie early enough for a tour of Vassar College. In those days Vassar was exclusively a women's school. Turning on their masculine charm, our husky oarsmen lured some of the fair undergraduates to the finish line to watch the race. The presence of these young lovelies to cheer them

on inspired the members of the Institute crew to heroic effort. They didn't win, but it was a close match. The eights see-sawed back and forth, but at the last moment the Poughkeepsie crew crossed the finish line a few inches ahead. This was the kind of race we didn't mind losing. Besides, we had the girls to console us.

In 1959 a majority of the crew graduated. To provide a second boat for competition, the Institute ordered another Pocock four, and offered the facilities of the boathouse on the Harlem to the Mount St. Michael School in the Bronx. For a number of years the Mount St. Michael boys helped with the program, filling out the boatings so that we might have competition in two fours. One of the Brothers who taught there inspired a charitable organization in Queens to donate five hundred dollars toward the new shell. The boat was delivered to Columbia's boathouse at Baker Field in the Spring of 1960. The Columbia rigger, Joe McCarthy, unpacked it, got it ready for launch, and the Institute boys proudly rowed it down from the Spuyten Duyvil with a new set of oars. Since 1960 was another Olympic year, again, unofficially, we named the boat the "Olympia II."

In the Fall of 1960 Carl Ullrich became Head Coach of Rowing at Columbia. Mr. Ullrich had been a coach at Cornell and was a veteran of the Korean War. He was a faithful friend of the Institute crew. He helped us raise money for the program, and set up many informal races for us on the Harlem; on several occasions he had an Institute four race against a number of his pair-oar heavyweight crews. Once he held a race between a four manned by members of the Institute staff and three Columbia fours. He always had room in his coaching launch for visitors from the Institute who wanted to watch his crews practice.

In 1961 the Institute bought the boathouse from the Viking Rowing Club and made extensive repairs: shored up the foundations, laid a watertight roof, shingled the walls, and enlarged the dock. In 1962 Dr. Frampton provided us with a larger, more powerful coaching launch. Now the Institute Rowing Club was no longer a Cinderella crew. Thus began the third phase in the history of rowing at the Institute: 1961-1968.

During this period Mr. Howland S. Davis arranged races for us with Pomfret School in the northeastern part of Connecticut, and his son, Mr. Howland Davis persuaded

Brooks School at North Andover, Massachusetts, to let us compete there. The race with Pomfret became an annual event, and we rowed twice with Brooks School: once in 1963 and again in 1964. The Institute lost both races with Brooks School but did manage to win a notable victory over Pomfret in the Spring of 61. One of the attractions of rowing at Pomfret was the opportunity it gave us to visit the colonial restorations at nearby Sturbridge.

Appropriately, the campus at Brooks School was chosen for a portion of the filming of John Knowles' classic, "A Separate Peace", an epitome of prep school life. In revivals of the film at the "Thalia", and at cinemas in the "Village", many of the episodes and scenes filmed at North Andover become strangely nostalgic.

In this period, too, Browne and Nichols remained on our list, as well as the annual trip to Buffalo. On one of our visits to the West Side, Mr. McGee persuaded us to stay over an extra day to give an exhibition race on the Royal Canadian Henley course at St. Catharine's, Ontario. The added expense for food and lodging reduced our funds. At our last dinner in the restaurant at the motel, the coach was pondering the likelihood of the management's accepting a personal check to cover the cost of the meal, when, in the nick of time, one of the guests at a neighboring table rose from his chair, approached, and hovering over us a few moments, asked questions about our program; then magnanimously insisted on paying the bill including the tips! The Coach heaved a sigh of relief. Again Providence has saved us at the last moment. Another instance of supernatural intervention!

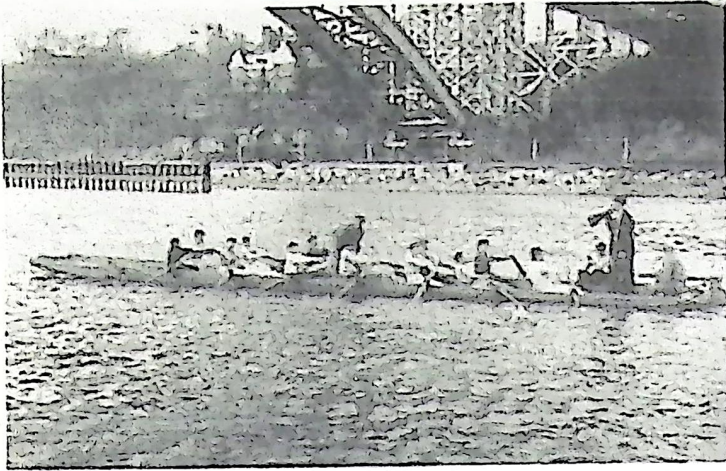
For many years, from 1962 until the program was eliminated, the crew received considerable financial support from Mrs. Ernest Lopez, a resident of Queens. Mrs. Lopez took courses in the education of the handicapped and had practice teaching at Van Cleve Hall. Realizing the value of rowing for the blind, she helped defray expenses for crew trips, helped pay the salaries of the crew assistants; contributed most generously toward the purchase of oars, new shells and other equipment. She faithfully attended regattas on the Harlem. In theatrical parlance the word "Angel" is applied to such unstinting donors.

Speaking of donors, another contributor deserves mention. Once, when the Coach and some members of the crew were riding in the Columbia launch with Mr. Ullrich, Bill Stowe, stroke of the Cornell Varsity, was also a visitor. Stowe had been a student at Kent School when the Institute crew had stayed overnight there in the mid-fifties and he had never forgotten our visit. He asked how the program was going and wished us well. A few days later the Institute received a check for five hundred dollars from his father as a donation toward the reconstruction of the dock. When Coach Ullrich left Columbia in 1964, Stowe replaced him and continued his interest in Institute rowing by holding races between Institute fours and his lightweight freshmen to conclude our Fall season. At present (1981) Bill is Head Coach of Rowing at the Coast Guard Academy at New London.

In 1966 the Institute ended its Fall season by an extra trip to Buffalo for a race with some high school novices, members of the Niagara Frontier Rowing Club at Tonawanda, New York. This is the last time that the crew rowed in an eight. The stroke that year was Kerry Wadman, a deaf-blind student with sufficient vision to see the coxswain beat out the rhythm.

As for crew assistants, Jimmy Dean was with us until 1964. He left his brother, Christopher Dean, to take his place. Chris stayed until 1966 when he left to fight in Vietnam. After that, Neil Gallagher, a student at Fordham College, served faithfully until he too went in the Army as a lieutenant. James Dean studied law at Boston University, and is now (1981) a partner with Putney, Twombly and Hirson in New York City.

It was difficult to find any local competition to conclude the Fall training season in 1967, and there were not enough oarsmen to boat two fours for an intramural race, so Mr. Hoard wrote to Harry Parker, the Head Coach of Rowing at Harvard University, to inquire if there were any schools along the Charles that had Fall practice. Mr. Parker replied that he did not know of any, but graciously offered us a workout with one of his freshman fours. His invitation to row from Harvard's historic Newell Boat House was eagerly accepted.



Mr. Roger Walker, then the Assistant Principal at the Institute, drove the crew up to Cambridge in his station wagon. It was a beautiful day in October with a remnant of autumnal color on the wooded slopes. Since the anxiety of competition was removed, the crew could relax and enjoy the outing on the tranquil waters of the Charles. The sequence of events often startles us with the

realization that there are patterns in our lives. While the Institute boat was going through its paces, the crews and launch of Northeastern University swept by. The driver bellowed through his megaphone, "What is that good-looking outfit? Am I seeing straight? What the hell are you doing here?" It was a voice from the past! It was our old friend Carl Ullrich who had been coaching at Northeastern since he had left Columbia. Later, Mr. Ullrich became Head Coach of Rowing at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, and at present (1981) is the Assistant Director of Athletics there.

In the mid-sixties the Institute began to row regularly at South Kent School in Connecticut. One of the things that made South Kent dear to us was its accessibility. It was less than a two hour's ride north from Bronx Park. Thus we were able to return to town while it was still daylight and have a banquet at Schrafft's Restaurant on Fordham Road before returning to the Institute campus. Over the years, as we continued to race there, we began to appreciate the school and what it stood for. The austerity and strength of the granite hills and somber forests that surrounded South Kent seemed to seep into the attitudes and outlook of its staff and students. A spirit of independence and rugged individualism pervaded the place. living apart in the wilderness made them a bit like Thoreau.

We enjoyed rowing at South Kent, even though we knew we couldn't win. At that time South Kent was noted for the success of its four-oared crews in interscholastic regattas, so that the Institute stood very little chance of beating any of its first string boats. In fact, that was what made us rather popular with the South Kent oarsmen. The boys who rowed in their ninth or tenth boat knew they

could win at least one race during the rowing season. Our regattas were always scheduled for Wednesday afternoons. Wednesdays South Kent relaxed its stern ways and unbent a little, devoting the afternoon to special programs and events, often for the benefit of the underprivileged. We would arrive there in the morning early enough to have some practice on the lake before lunch. These workouts were more like an event in a picnic or an outing rather than preparation for a grim athletic encounter. The Institute coach would often row at bow and place one of the partially sighted oarsmen in the coxswain's seat, giving him the chance to issue orders and discover the importance of having them obeyed promptly. Sometimes, after the race, and before returning to New York, we were able to bathe in a small pond that South Kent used as a swimming pool. This was a refreshing experience after the sweat and excitement of the race.

Some prep schools have been accused of serving a special menu to visiting teams, hoping that indigestion might hamper their performance. There was nothing like that at South Kent. Everything was open and above board. At lunch we sat at the same table as our opponents and ate the same food. Once we were honored by having at our table Stanley Pocock's son, the grandson of George Pocock, the founder of the firm. Young Pocock was a likable boy, and before enrolling at South Kent had worked in his father's shop in Seattle. He entertained us by describing some of the procedures and difficulties involved in the construction of a racing shell and explaining how best to maintain it. We found his conversation interesting and instructive.

The staff and students at South Kent welcomed us warmly, adjusting to the handicap with intelligence and tactful consideration. L. Wynne Wister, the Headmaster, the year he retired, extended an invitation to drop in for a cup of tea at his home in Vermont if any of us happened to be in the vicinity.

Another favorite of the Institute crew was the Browne and Nichols School at Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Mr. Wilde had introduced us in the Spring of 1958. It was a day school, and if we needed to stay overnight we applied for accommodations at the Perkins Institution for the Blind in nearby Watertown. Perkins always entertained us most cordially, giving us a game room where we

could while away an evening at pool or cards, comfortable beds and a hearty breakfast.

We held our races in the morning at Browne and Nichols, leaving the afternoon free to watch a practice of the Harvard crew. Mr. Parker never refused our requests to ride in the coaching launch, and although there were usually five of us, somehow we managed to squeeze in. It was a rare treat to watch Harvard's miracle of precision rowing. There was little conversation between the coach and his crew. All the details

seemed to have been planned out beforehand. There was no barking of orders through a megaphone. The rhythm, the dynamics of boat and oarsmen had a hypnotic fluid grace that one never tired of watching. Some magic must have produced this absolute muscular control, as unerring as the movements of a ballet. The Charles is always crowded with school and college crews but it would be unfair to compare their performance with Harvard's.

In all the years we rowed there, we never won a race with Browne and Nichols, although they tried to give us something like equal competition.

From the Fall of 1968 until the program was eliminated in the Spring of 1973, it became more and more difficult to form a crew at the Institute. The Institute began to specialize in the education of the multiple handicapped until there were hardly enough able bodied students to maintain track, soccer and crew at the same time. However, the blind oarsmen continued to hold annual regattas with Browne and Nichols School and South Kent until the end. Sculling (rowing with two oars instead of one) for recreation had always been a part of the rowing program. Although in the early years the Institute possessed no singles, doubles, or quads, the Viking Rowing Club was always willing to lend us such equipment.

In 1964 the Institute acquired a Pocock pair-oar racing shell which could be converted to double sculls. The coach could row at bow, or from the coxswain's seat direct the course of the boat and correct the movements of the blind scullers. A number of the Institute oarsmen became quite proficient, but two in particular were outstanding: Bruce Alcott and Clifton Perez. Both were partially sighted and had enough vision to enable them to row at a fixed distance from the sea wall along the Harlem River Drive so that they did not need a coxswain. Both boys were natural scullers; they could row without error, maintaining perfect balance and rhythm even in the pressure of a race. One of the crew assistants at this time, Mike Mahady, also helped with the sculling program. Mike rowed for the New York Athletic Club at Orchard Beach and was an excellent coach. Bruce Alcott received further instruction from coaches and members of the Oyster Bay Rowing Club on Long Island, where he was allowed to take out a single alone. Then in 1970 the Institute bought a fiberglass training boat that could be rigged for pair-oar or

double sculls. Both the cedar pair-oar convertible and the trainer were used in races as pair-oar and double sculls. They were very popular and useful boats. That same year (1970) John Abele became Head Coach of Rowing at Columbia and he arranged two races in doubles between Bruce and Cliff and some of his Columbia oarsmen. The Institute was victorious in the first regatta, Columbia in the second.

Of course the facts stated here hardly reflect the complete picture of rowing at the Institute. As the years pass, one tends to forget the unpleasant side of things: the disappointments, the frustrations, the mistakes, and the wasted effort. Still, these may be a destined part of all human endeavors. There is no victory without defeat; no defeat without victory.

Then there are incidents which, though exasperating at the time, later seem entertaining even humorous. For the Schoolboy Nationals in '56, Coach Riley had bought a pair of shiny new shoes, Coach Hoard a pair of well-tailored slacks. Unfortunately the float used by Poughkeepsie High School could ill sustain the weight when several crews carrying fours and eights crowded on to it. It sank several inches into the Hudson with disastrous results to shoes and trousers! In the salt water the shoes became sodden, and the trousers lost their pristine crispness forever.

Memorable, too, indeed, was the race with Haverford Prep in the Fall of '58. Careful preparation the night before enabled the crew to load the shell with dispatch for an early departure. That morning the sky was black with heavy clouds, and shortly after the school bus crossed the George Washington Bridge on the trip to Philadelphia a driving rain set in. As we were approaching Newark, the old, tired engine sputtered, gasped and refused to carry us any farther. We parked off the road, found a telephone and requested the Institute to send us a newer bus.

The storm had increased in fury, and when the second vehicle had arrived we got out, untied the fastenings and transferred the shell from the top of one bus to the other. We were soaked to the skin. Water dripped from our clothing and formed narrow rivulets that crept across the floor of the bus. This unexpected delay used up our spare time. The race was scheduled for the early afternoon. More

telephone calls. This time to Philadelphia. We offered to cancel the race, but the Haverford coach postponed it, urging us to continue our journey.

It was late afternoon when we arrived in the City of Brotherly Love, where our driver was a stranger. Instead of reaching Boat House Row in Fairmount Park we found ourselves threading our way through ancient, narrow streets in the downtown district, placing the shell in constant jeopardy of cracking up against a brick wall. Somehow we managed to find the Schuylkill, unload the shell and launch it in the relentless rain. By this time it was beginning to grow dark. Still, the patient Haverford crew greeted us with smiles and expressions of sympathy in reply to our tale of woe. Tired from the long trip and the discomfort of wet clothing, the Institute oarsmen were hardly up to their best performance. Haverford had two crews rowing against us. Their first boat finished far ahead, but we did manage to beat the second. Hardly a victory, though, wince it was manned by rank novices.

It was near midnight when we were back at our boathouse on the Harlem. The rain was still spattering on the pavement, and again we faced the dismal task of struggling with wet ropes and stubborn knots in order to unload the shell. Later, as we passed through the rear gate at the Institute, the crew gave a cheer. It seemed miraculous to find such things as hot showers, dry clothing, and a comfortable bed. We felt quite heroic at having survived the obstacles, the discomforts that Fate had imposed upon us that day.

Most oarsmen look back upon their experiences, even the unpleasant ones, with satisfaction, taking pride in having done their best, even when they could not win. Once, in a letter, Dr. Frampton summed it up quite beautifully: "Rowing", he wrote, "is the pursuit of an ideal."

Mention should be made of a large number of persons who became involved, directly or indirectly, with the Institute's rowing program. The chauffeurs not only transported the students to and from the boathouse but drove the school bus to Buffalo, Boston, Philadelphia, Middletown, Lake Placid and other points, North, South, East and West. They also drove and maintained the coaching launch. Their

loyal support deserves high praise. The program owed a great deal to the maintenance staff: there were always oarlocks to be repaired, oars to be mended and the dock reconstructed from time to time. The chef and kitchen help prepared bag suppers to be consumed in the dormitory after practice. The domestic staff laundered uniforms. Teachers, scholarship students, and visitors from foreign parts helped with the supervision, drove station wagons and even learned how to row so that they could fill out a boat to provide competition in practice on the Harlem. The ramifications of an activity like rowing can be astonishing.