

1937

BOYS FIRST BOAT (5-3)

| | | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|--------|----------|
| Bow | Cyrus Stephen Eaton Jr. '37 | 5' 11" | 152 |
| 2 | Crozer Fox Martin '37 | 6' 0" | 167 |
| 3 | Charles Ransom Brothwell Jr. '38 | 6' 1½" | 175 |
| 4 | John Frederic Requardt Jr. '39 | 6' 1¾" | 170 |
| 5 | Peter Horst Conze '38 | 6' 0" | 178 |
| 6 | Julian Simmons '38 | 6' 1½" | 186 |
| 7 | Henry Middleton Drinker '38 | 6' 1¾" | 176 |
| Stroke | John Allan Blair '37 (Captain) | 6' 0" | 165 |
| Coxswain | Evan Welling Thomas II '38 | 5' 7" | 115 |
| Average | | 6' ¾" | 171 lbs. |



Walker, Morris, Eaton, Martin, Brothwell, Requardt, Thomas, Conze, Simmons, Drinker, Blair, Sill

First Boat Shell: *F. H. S.* (Sims & Sons, Putney, 1936)

Coach: Thomas Dixon Walker '19

Chairman: Henry Thompson Morris '37

Manager: George Clarendon Cunningham Jr. '37

Assistant Manager: John William Simmons '37

Kent two lengths ahead of MIT Second Freshmen

Yale Second Freshmen one-half length ahead of Kent

Kent two and a half lengths ahead of Manhattan College Second Varsity

Kent three and a half lengths ahead of Belmont Hill School*

Third of 5 in Schoolboy Rowing Association of America Regatta (2.4 seconds behind Tabor Academy)

* course record



Henley Plate: Cyrus Stephen Eaton Jr. '37
Bishop's Oar: Henry Middleton Drinker '38



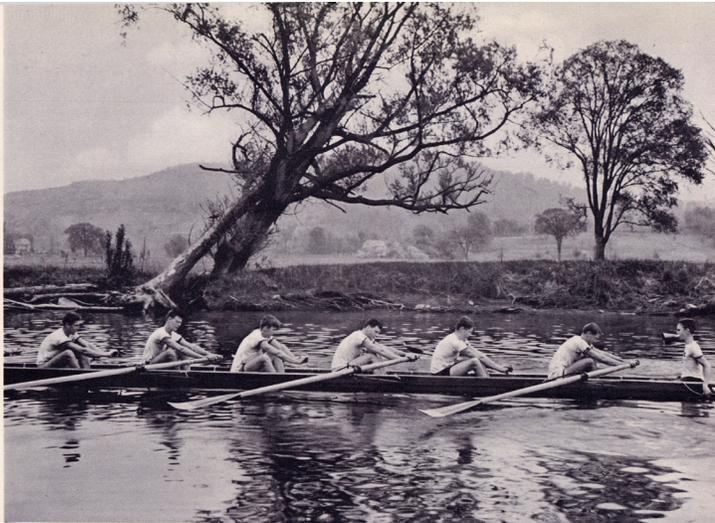
In 1937, Tabor Academy would go on to win the Thames Challenge Cup at Henley for the second consecutive year.

LIFE MAGAZINE

In Kent rowing history, the 1948 *Life* magazine cover story is well known, but it was not the first feature in *Life* on Kent Crew. That came in 1937:

From a rowing point of view, even the most swank and expensive of US preparatory schools must yield to Connecticut's Kent, where expense is conditioned to the pupil's parents' purse and swank is subordinated to the simple life. Founded 31 years ago

by Father Frederick Herbert Sill, an Episcopal monk of the Order of the Holy Cross, who is still its headmaster and rowing coach, Kent lets its boys pay a tuition fee ranging from nothing to \$1,500, depending on their families' circumstances. And no matter what their circumstances, all boys share in the school work of making beds, waiting on tables, washing windows, tending furnaces. Because Father Sill is an old crew man himself (1895 Columbia varsity), and because the Housatonic River is nearby, Kent crews have long been famous. In 1927 and 1930, Kent crews were the first US boarding-school crews to row in the British Henley, a fixture they won in 1933.



KENT SCHOOL ROWING

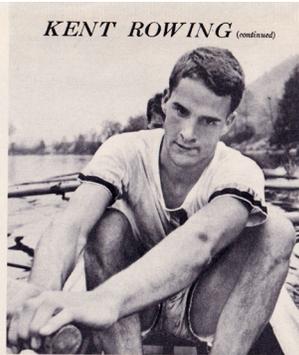
The Country's Crack Prep School Crew Prepares for the Schoolboy Rowing Association's Annual Regatta May 29

When the third annual interscholastic regatta of the Schoolboy Rowing Association of America is held at Lake Quinsigamond, Worcester, Mass. May 29, many an excellent school, including old and famed St. George's will be represented. But from a rowing point of view, even the most swank and expensive of U. S. preparatory schools must yield to Connecticut's Kent, where expense is conditioned to the pupil's parents' purse and where swank is subordinated to the simple life. Founded 31 years ago by Father Frederick Herbert Sill, an Episcopal monk of the Order of the Holy Cross who is still its headmaster

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In black canonicals, Kent's headmaster and coach Father Sill bellows instructions to the school's first crew. Standing in picture at left is Senior Coach F. D. Walker.

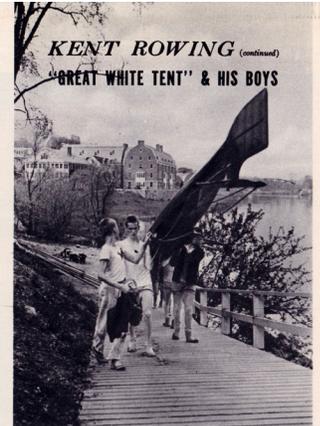


KENT ROWING (continued)

Stroke of Kent's 1937 first crew which will enter the interscholastic Schoolboy Regatta at Worcester this Saturday is John A. Blair, 18-year-old Kent senior who stands six feet high, weighs 170 pounds. He stroked the Henley crew last year.



Coxswain of the Kent first crew is Socialist Leader Norman Thomas' son Evan W. Thomas II, 17-year-old fifth former who weighs a mere 118 pounds, is 5 ft. 3 in. tall. Below, one of the eleven Kent shells is about to be lowered into the water.



KENT ROWING (continued) "GREAT WHITE TENT" & HIS BOYS

Preliminary to crew practice at Kent is currying shells like this one down to the Housatonic River. The School's main buildings can be seen in the background.



Relaxing aftermath of an afternoon's rowing is a dip in the waters of the Housatonic. These younger Kent boys are potential candidates for next year's first boat.



Coaching over for the day, Father Sill, in the white canoe which has earned him the nickname the "Great White Tent," addresses some Sixth Formers in his study.

THE GENTLEMAN'S EIGHT



Second Fifth Form Boat of 1936

A fine example of the passion that was generated by rowing at Kent during its First 100 Years is found in the Class of 1937, which eventually contributed three members to the 1937 First Boat, four more to the 1937 Second Boat, and an additional three to the KSBC managerial staff.

But the Class of '37 rowers and coxswains who *never* rose to the heights of the First or Second Boats have a story of their own to tell . . .

1936

Two photos of Fifth Form crews in the spring of 1936 survive.

One has come from the estate of **Henry Alexander Salm**. It was autographed by all his fellow members of the crew and hung on his wall for nearly eighty years. Indeed, this boat was the **Second Fifth Form Boat of 1936**, which, in a surprising upset, had won the top bracket, Class A, in the annual **Kent Form Regatta**, symbolizing intramural supremacy on

the Housatonic River for the year.

Kent News: "In the Finals of this class the First Fifths [actually, the Second Fifths], which might be comparable to that famous Fifth Form Crew in 1934 [see 1934], showed superior power and form from the beginning, though they were jumped at the start. By the time the two crews were at the half-way mark, the 1937 Crew had the race well in hand, with a lead of nearly a length."

But the story hardly begins or ends there. The second photo is of the **First Fifth Form Boat of 1936**, the best boat and overwhelming favorite in that season-ending Form Regatta.

The lineup of the 1936 Second Fifths and their Future 1937 Boating

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Bow | George Barron Mallory | First Sixth Form Boat |
| 2 | George Clarendon Cunningham | KSBC Manager |
| 3 | Joseph James Bodell Jr. | Stage Manager, Bell Ringer |
| 4 | Henry Alexander Salm | |
| 5 | George Watson Hall Smith Jr. | First Sixth Form Boat |
| 6 | Karl Edward Carlson | First Sixth Form Boat |
| 7 | John William Simmons | Assistant KSBC Manager |
| Stroke | William Wark Tyng | First Sixth Form Boat |
| Coxswain | Harvey Hine Chamberlain | Jazz Band |

(Small world. After my future father, Second Fifth Form bow-oar **George Barron Mallory**, married the sister of First Fifth Form 6-oar **Howard Carter Davis Jr.**, the latter would become my uncle Tad, and eventually the father of **Howard Carter Davis III '68**.)

As you can see from where they ended up the following year, this was also a very talented group. Indeed, their success during the intramural season had qualified them to race the top Choate School form crew away in Wallingford, a contest they lost only by a nail-biting quarter-length, but in the end-of-season Kent Form Regatta, the First Fifths experienced a broken oarlock near the halfway point of their preliminary heat and could not finish the course. And so, heartbreakingly, they were eliminated and never got to race in the final.

Heyward Pepper, brother of 1936 bow-oar **George Warton Pepper III** and captain of the ill-fated 1936 First Fifths, received “abbreviated numerals with crossed-oar” at the Rowing Banquet in recognition of his service, but at the end of the year, the Class of 1937 had produced this fine and talented First Fifth Form Boat filled with frustration, along with another fine and talented Second Fifth Form Boat full of joy and pride.

During the following year, the Class of '37 would harness all those emotions.

1937

At Kent in the spring of 1937, in addition to the First and Second Boats, there were one Second Form boat, two Third Form boats, three Fourth Form boats, two Fifth Form boats, and two Sixth Form boats—a total of twelve eights practicing daily at the school. Counting managerial staff, that meant upward of 120 participants in Crew out of a student body of 300.

In previous years, Sixth Formers who had not made the First or Second Boats but nevertheless continued to participate in intramural competition were occasionally referred to respectfully as “the Gentlemen”—unable to rise to KSBC, but nobly continuing on for the love of the sport.

Midway through the 1937 season, the *Kent News* passed on the moniker “Gentleman’s Eight” to the undefeated First Sixths in a front-page headline in recognition of the sartorial splendor of their unique custom racing shirts, complete with top hats and

| The lineup of the 1936 First Fifths and their Future 1937 Boating | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bow | Richard Spelman Eustis Jr. | Second Boat |
| 2 | Alexander Mahon Craig Jr. | First Sixth Form Boat |
| 3 | Crozier Fox Martin | First Boat |
| 4 | Heyward Myers Pepper (Captain) | Second Boat |
| 5 | Wilbur Lucius Cross III | |
| 6 | Howard Carter Davis Jr. | Tennis |
| 7 | William McLaren Ellison | Second Boat |
| Stroke | John Price Brew | Second Boat |
| Coxswain | Robert Miller Francis | First Sixth Form Boat |



First Fifth Form Boat of 1936



Kent

Vol. XXIII.
KENT, CONNECTICUT

**“GENTLEMEN’S EIGHT”
VICTORIOUS IN ANNUAL
FORM ROWING REGATTA**

**Sixth Form Crew Leads First Fifths,
First Fourths in Feature Event
On River Monday Afternoon**

FIRST AND SECOND THIRDS ALSO WIN

The annual Form Regatta was held on the river during the afternoon of Monday, May 30th. Instead of the usual

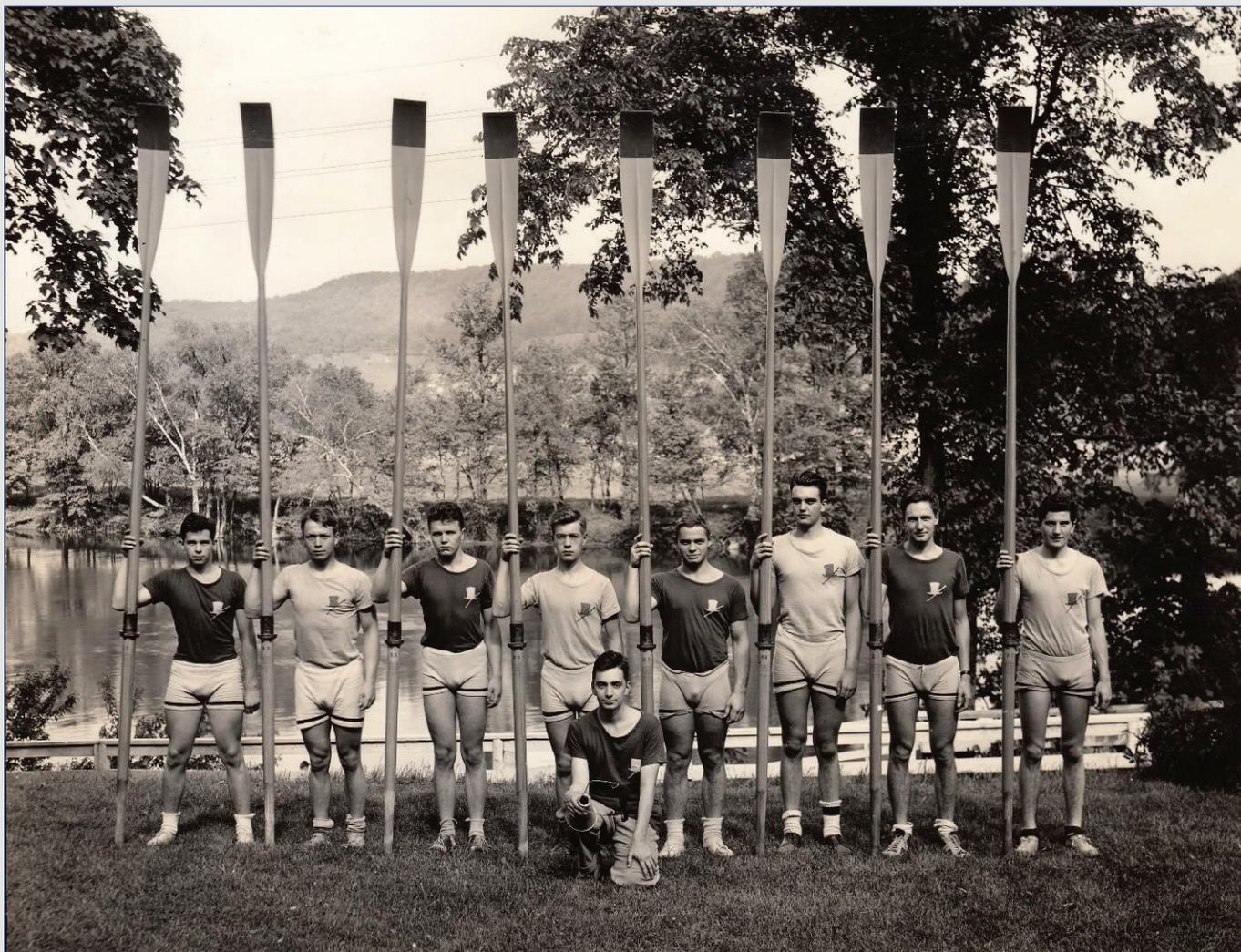
Five School Records Broken As Class Of Interform Track Meet For Second

On Sunday, the 6th of June, the School held its annual Track Meet on the upper field. The Sixth Form was victorious with a score of 70. The Fifth Form was credited with 24, and the Fourth and Third tied for third and fourth places with three points apiece. School records were shattered right and left. Old marks were broken in the 440-yard dash, the mile run, the shot put, the running broad jump, and the hundred-yard dash. Jim Reily, Pete Elser, and Bill Thorn, all of the Sixth Form, were outstanding in the

day nine qualified the hundred-yard put and standing jumps, and several jump. The final highly competitive and Harold Amos and Harold Amos, along with Eaton, Miller, and Alsebrook set a latter faded at Amoss and Reil second and third Farr finished a

The 1937 First Sixth Form Crew

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bow | George Barron Mallory | Yale |
| 2 | William Wark Tyng | Harvard |
| 3 | Howard Gay Davis Jr. | Yale |
| 4 | Karl Edward Carlson | Stanford |
| 5 | George Watson Hall Smith Jr. | Princeton |
| 6 | John Teobaldo Monzani | Princeton |
| 7 | Alexander Mahon Craig Jr. | Princeton |
| Stroke | Wilbur Lucius Cross III | Yale |
| Coxswain | Robert Miller Francis | (the family business) |



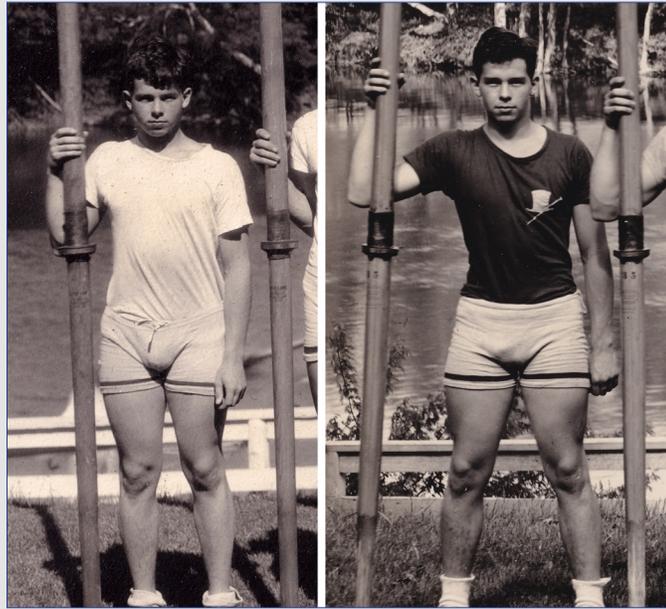
The 1937 Gentleman's Eight in sartorial splendor

canes on their chests and alternating blue and gray down the boat.

This was a group of high achievers; witness the universities they would go on to attend. In addition, Tyng was President of the News Board and Mallory Chairman of the Bell Ringers.

Indeed, bow-oar **Barron Mallory** was so fond of his memories of the 1937 Gentleman's Eight that even

decades later he was regaling me, his young son, with their story and showing me his copy of the team photo. According to him, the origin of their shirts was that they rowed like Fred Astaire in his white tie and tails, coming elegantly off the line and then establishing rhythm and swing that would carry them serenely past their opponents. (The movie *Top Hat* had been a big hit in theaters just two years before.) Dad described to me



how he had designed the special shirts and ordered them and the nine pairs of “rowing trou,” as we used to call them, from the Yale Coop.

I have no idea if he was exaggerating his role to me, and there is really no one left to ask, but surely this was the summit of my father’s athletic career, an experience he shared with many generations of lower boat rowers during Kent Rowing’s First 100 Years. Intramural crew at Kent shaped innumerable lives, this despite the fact that the majority of those who never made it into the First or Second Kent Boats never again in their lives pulled an oar in competition.

It is interesting to observe my father’s transformation from pudgy adolescent in 1936 to proud young man in 1937, but even when he graduated, he was still *maybe* 5-foot-6, and well below 130 pounds. He was often asked why he didn’t cox, and he would always reply that he wanted “to pull his own weight”—a common expression in the English language which originated in the sport of rowing.

The rowers sitting immediately ahead of my father in the Gentleman’s Eight were not a great deal more physically imposing than he was. Although Dad was easily the smallest, seats 2 through 5 were manned by individuals 5-foot-8 at best, and weighing far less than 140 pounds. Only the stern three had the height and weight one might expect in a champion crew.

Nevertheless, their record was exemplary, 6-1, beaten only by a single college varsity.

During the next two years, and even to the end

Season’s Record for the Gentleman’s Eight:

- First Sixths three-quarters of a length ahead of First Fifths
- First Sixths well ahead of First Fourths
- Kent Form Regatta: First Sixths one length ahead of First Fifths,
First Fourths one-half length further behind
- Rollins College Varsity one length ahead of the First Sixths, with the
Williams College Varsity one-half length further behind
- First Sixths one and a half lengths ahead of Choate’s top form crew

of the form crew era in the late 1940s, Sixth Form crews continued to occasionally be referred to as “the Gentlemen.”

The 1936 Second Fifth’s 4-oar **Henry Alexander “Alex” Salm ’37** had been invited to visit Kent in the spring of 1936 by form rower **William Dickson Seidler ’38**, his former roommate at *Institut Le Rosey* in Switzerland. (Interestingly, his 1936 boatmate, Barron Mallory ’37, had also attended *Le Rosey*, which boasted students such as Shah Reza Pahlavi of Iran, Prince Rainier of Monaco, and Prince Philip of Greece, later husband of Queen Elizabeth II of England.)

Salm would graduate from Dartmouth in 1941. During World War II, as commander of the B-29 *City of St. Louis*, 6th Squadron, 29th Bomber Group, 314th Wing of the 20th Air Force, he flew more than thirty missions. His decorations included the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters.

Although he spent only a bit over a year at Kent, Alex Salm became one of the school’s most loyal and generous benefactors. During the Campaign for the Permanent Kent, of which he served as honorary chairman, Alex

established the H. Alexander Salm '37 Career Teaching Chair in American History. He also left his mark on Kent through his generous gifts to the Rowing Center and Hoerle Hall. In recognition of all that he did for Kent, Alex was named an Honorary Trustee in 2003. He lived into his late nineties, all the while with that autographed photo of his Second Fifth Form Boat hanging proudly in his home.

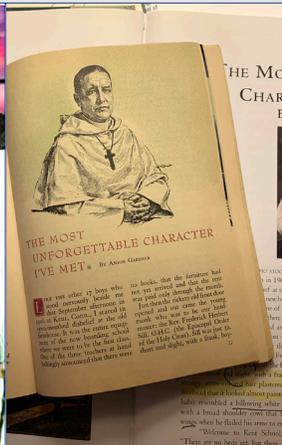
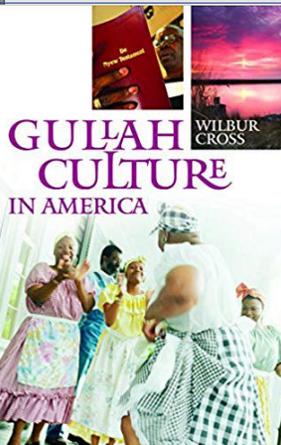
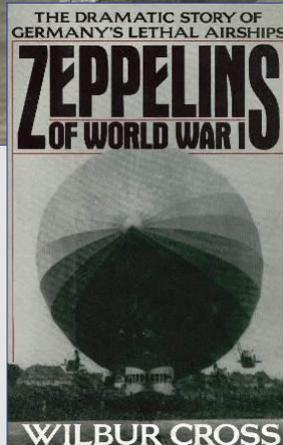
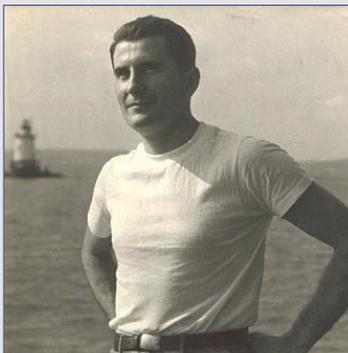
The 1937 Gentleman's Eight stroke-oar **Wilbur Lucius Cross III '37**, the grandson of the sitting Governor of the State of Connecticut, received the award on Prize Day as the year's "outstanding Kent oarsman who has not attained the First or Second Crew." In 1938, he would win the single sculling championship of Yale with his Gentleman's Eight teammate, Barron Mallory, coming in third.



Cross graduated from Yale in 1941 and served in the US Army Air Force in the South Pacific during World War II, rising to the rank of Captain in the 581st Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion and earning two battle stars for action in enemy-held territory.

He worked for ten years as an editor at Time Life, publishing hundreds of articles and more than fifty

books on a fascinating variety of subjects, such as *Ghost Ship of the Pole*, the story of an Italian airship which crashed attempting to reach the North Pole, resulting in an international rescue effort; *Zeppelins of World War I*; and *Gullah*



Culture in America, which he published at the age of eighty-nine.

In 2012, Cross disclosed that he had ghostwritten the famous 1961 *Reader's Digest* article "The Most Unforgettable Character Ever Met" about Father Sill, authored by Anson Blake Gardner '08 (see 1922 and 1927).

Wilbur Cross passed away in 2019 at the age of one hundred.

The 1937 Gentleman's Eight bow-oar **George Barron Mallory '37**, plank holder and gunnery officer on the battleship *USS Massachusetts* during World War II, would lead for a time the Fortune 500 company founded by his father, serve as chair of the Kent Alumni Association, and send his four children to Kent. Up until his early passing, he stayed connected with many of his classmates from Kent and Yale and his shipmates in the US Navy, but I'm sure he never stood taller in his life than that moment during the spring of 1937 when he posed with his teammates in the Gentleman's Eight.

I am sure that every one of Kent Rowing's First 100 Years could provide similar stories of young boys and, in time, young girls who grew to maturity rowing in form boats and, after 1947, club boats. In this book, the Class of '37 represents them all.

