

1963

BOYS FIRST BOAT (I3-I)

Bow	John Hastings Wasson '63
2	Edward Walter "Ward" Wellman Jr. '63
3	Alfred William McCoy '64
4	George Allen Bourne '63
5	Harrington "Kim" Littell Jr. '63
6	Christopher George Janus '63
7	William Frederick "Hap" Allen '63
Stroke	Peter Neely '63 (Captain)
Coxswain	Robert Benedict Davies '66



Walker, Wasson, Wellman, McCoy, Bourne, Davies, Littell, Janus, Allen, Neely, Perry, Chamberlain

First Boat Shell: *W.L. Chapman* '47 (Pocock, 1961)

Coach: Thomas Dixon Walker '19

Assistant Coach: William Hartwell Perry Jr.

Manager: Peter Aims Chamberlain '63

Kent 1.5 seconds ahead of Yale 150lb. Varsity

Kent 8 seconds ahead of Phillips Academy Andover

Kent 6 seconds ahead of Harriton High School

Fathers' Weekend: Kent 3 seconds ahead of Princeton Second Freshmen

Harvard Second Freshmen over Yale Second Freshmen

Kent 0.4 seconds ahead of Harvard Second Freshmen, Kent classified first of 4



Washington-Lee High School 5 seconds ahead of Kent
Kent two lengths ahead of Poughkeepsie High School
First of 7 in New England Interscholastic Rowing Championships (one length ahead of Phillips Academy Andover)

Henley Plate: Christopher George Janus '63

Bishop's Oar: George Allen Bourne '63



First Boat 7-oar Hap Allen '63:

As a 12-year old, I felt I had no choice about going to Kent (nor did I give much thought to much of anything). My father John Findlay Allen '27, my uncle Yorke Allen '32, and my brother Arthur Yorke Allen '54 had all rowed at Kent School. The rowing thing was built into me.

I was an uncoordinated kid, the operative term for same at Kent in those days being "spaz". I made one tackle for the Massie football team Second Form year, fanned a shot on goal on the jayvee hockey team Fifth Form year, and was not one of the cool crowd, a group / clique I felt was defined by physical prowess.

Nonetheless, come spring and that glorious symphony of cracking ice on the Housatonic, my excitement always grew.

In my under-form years of rowing, there was nothing glamorous about thrashing about on the Housatonic in aged shells like the Rothermere. In later years, there was the early spring "ascent" to the funky rowing machines in the gloom of the North Dorm attic. Simply to be given a seat there was exciting, the closer to the mirror at the front the better. The machines were not all that functional, each one with some idiosyncrasy. Still, just to be there mattered. Tote Walker's persistent imperative there was for 'slide control', making for enhanced sensitivity in one's rear-end.

With the river ice broken and cleared, the next point of daily anticipation happened on the bulletin board on the Boardwalk sometime around lunch. In two columns, Tote would post the boatings for the afternoon practice. Whether one's name was there (and just which column it was in) was a major focal point for the day.

"One spring day, our crews were sitting on the old wooden oar box just inside the Boathouse. A race was coming and our guts were churning. Tote stood in front of us with his gruff but calm manner. Then, in that raspy voice, he said, "Some people



think it's not whether you win or lose. It's how you play the game."

Looking straight at our 4-oar, George Bourne, Tote asked, "Do you believe that, George?" to which George's immediate reply was, "No, sir!"

"Neither do I!"

First Boat bow-oar John Hastings Wasson '63:

My memory of Worcester is clear. In bow, I could see the outline of the other boats falling behind. I could feel that we were synched. The race was effortless. We were in the zone.

A perfect sunrise on a smooth pond still brings me close to that 'zone', yet it seems that our shared exhilaration gifted us something more.

I cherish that memory.

Hap: "For someone who was never a jock, I nonetheless enjoyed the sport, happily applied myself to it, and went on (with several classmates) to some success at Penn."

In fact, First Boat 7-oar **William Frederick Allen '63** would rise to IRA Champion like Pater as 3-oar in the 1967 Penn Varsity.

Second Boat 4-oar **Christopher Dvyckinck Williams '63** would fulfill Pater's obsession with Henley by winning the 1967 Thames Challenge Cup as stroke-oar of the Cornell 150lb. Varsity.

First Boat 5-oar **Harrington Littell Jr. '63** was the grandson of **Samuel Harrington Littell**, Pater's good friend and roommate at General Theological Seminary (see p. 24).

VIETNAM

Graduating from college in 1967, the Class of '63 would take the full brunt of the Vietnam War. Informal surveys suggests that about a third of the boys in the class ended up in some sort of national service, mostly the military, but also the Peace Corp, Vista, etc. Several club rowers, along with Bourne, Littell, Allen, and Neely in the First Boat, served in-country on active duty. No deaths among Class of '63 veterans, but that doesn't mean there were no casualties (see 1936, 1948).

First Boat stroke oar and Captain **Pete Neely '63**: "We were in college during the build up to Vietnam, and it was impossible to ignore the debates that raged over the war: the body count, the tactics, and the morality. One way or another, all of our decisions regarding the war and our participation in it were colored by that national and local discussion.

"Most of those who went into the military enlisted rather than wait for the inevitability of the draft. Generally we didn't enlist out of some gung-ho desire to fight for the Constitution and the American Way or to fight Communism. It was more an attempt to control to some extent our destinies in the middle of a very complicated, lethal war."

Club rower **Alexis Charles "Lex" Towle '63** in 2016: "Like most Marines who experienced the jungles and paddies of Nam, [Charles Guilford] Chuck Girdwood '63 [a baseball player at Kent] rarely speaks of his time in-country. But last year during one of our infrequent conversations we spoke of my engineer battalion's role north of the Hai Van Pass and around Quang Tri province. In '69 or '70, Chuck's Marine rifle company engaged in an operation south of Danang.

Chuck lost two lieutenants in a terrible battle. He named two of his children after them."

Baseball player **McNeil Seymour Stringer '63**: "I flew C-130s in the Vietnam theater for almost 2.5 years. Permanent base was Taiwan, but I spent three weeks of every month in RVN. I never engaged in combat *per se*, but saw plenty of its results, including one memory burned in my mind where I transported the body of an Army soldier to Saigon from some in-country post — he had been killed by mortar fire on the highway to the airport on his way home at the end of his tour."

Club rower **Serge Alexander Schmemann '63**: "When I went there in 1969, and when I returned home a year and 12 days later, Vietnam was a subject my friends and I avoided talking about. For those who had not gone, there was something embarrassing about talking to someone who had, after all the energies they had expended on damning the war and anyone who was part of it, and on eluding the draft. And for my part, I had no interest in defending a war that all the guys in my unit hated just as much, only in a different way."

After Kent and Harvard, Serge, the descendant of a Russian Orthodox saint, would become a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the Associated Press, the *International Herald Tribune*, and the *New York Times*. The September 12, 2001 edition of the *NYT* included a front page story by Serge on the 9/11 attacks.

Exchange student and club rower **Richard Billing Dearlove '63**, son of a 1947 British Olympic Silver Medalist rower, would go on to Cambridge after Kent and eventually rise to be leader of the British Secret Intelligence Service or MI6. In James Bond parlance, for five years he was "M".

At the end of Kent Rowing's First Century, Richard was serving as a member of the Kent Board of Trustees.

Club rower **William Faulkner Amsden Bryant '63**, the younger brother of 1954 First Boat stroke-oar **Samuel Wood Bryant '54**, had a rich and varied adult career, including serving as Chief of Staff for United States Senator Claiborne Pell, helping to write the Pell Grant legislation. He even found time to coach crew at Potomac Boat Club.