

*Written by Marguerite VanderSchaaff, July 31, 1957, just a day before Phil Gravink was honored in his hometown of Clymer.*

Returning this week from one of the greatest experiences that a young man ever acquires, Philip Gravink, Clymer, NY, will be welcomed back to Western New York from a tour of European countries and will be told many a time "well done". Many things he will have to tell about his summer, the great Henley Regatta in England, the trip and rowing in Italy and Switzerland, his tours of Holland, France and Belgium, and other places. But, there are some things Phil will not tell. These things have been told during the past years by magazines such as Life, newspapers the United States over, and even World publications have been written about this Western New York boy. These things are the facts about what has made this man an international athlete. Things that brought about of feeling of pride to his parents, Mr. & Mrs. William Gravink, Clymer, and just a good feeling to those who read the accounts and knew Phil. These things we feel are worth knowing, yes worth recounting here.

Back in Clymer Central School, Phil took part and played the common high school sports, football, basketball and baseball, and seemed to find in sports a definite interest and something that he enjoyed. His mother's scrapbook show many clippings about some of the other things that Phil enjoyed. His fox hunting and trapping, many times boasting the most or runnerup in Chautauqua County competitions of sport clubs. His interest in Boy Scouts and participating in activities of that nature. His church membership and activities , all a part of the development of this man. Upon completion of high school, Phil enrolled in Cornell University, College of Agriculture. Here under the guidance of Duane Heil, a student friend from Ashville, Phil found another sport to his interest - that of crew rowing. As one sports writer a few years ago in the Jamestown Post Journal says, "one sport he's taken to --- like a duck takes to water". So began the participation and development of Phil Gravink, 1957 "stroke" on the crew of Cornell, winners of the International Henley Regatta, England.

This all began four years ago, and down through every article in the races that Phil participated in, such phrases as, "impressive performance", "steady manner", "outstanding calmness", "athletic style", outline the manner in which Phil has constructed for his team first, and finally for himself the reputation of honor. Mr. Peter MacMannus, Athletic Alumni of Cornell in his presentation to Phil of the Butler Trophy, June 1956, said, "To Phil Gravink, a great stroke, a splendid oarsman, a fine gentlemen". In an interview with Cornell Coach H. H. "Stork" Sanford, when asked about his crew possibilities for the Olympics replied, "If we go to the Olympics, it will be due to the whole team, each working together as this team does." He went on to recount the times that the crew, but for working together as this team does," could not have won the races they had. Sports writers in Sports Illustrated say that Clymer, New York was again placed on the map so to speak, when Phil Gravink was given the greatest odds in the building a berth for himself on the Olympic team in the spring of 1956. Their article bears Phil out as a "stroke" with the ability of leading any crew to victory.

From the freshman, to the senior year, Phil was a member of a winning crew. First in freshman, then junior varsity, then varsity competition, he was a member of a crew that displayed outstanding power and rowing ability. Undoubtedly the hardest position of the nine man team, that of "stroke," made Phil the member of the team to win or lose a race. His was the responsibility to set the pace or speed of the rowing. For instance, in the Syracuse regatta this past summer, the pace 30 strokes per minute was set by Phil to start the race. However, the pace Phil found soon had to be increased and in the end the team was rowing a 37 stroke per minutes speed. This brought Cornell crew just ahead of Pennsylvania for a trip to Henley Regatta, England. In the Henley regatta, July 3-6, first rowed in 1839 on the Thames River in England, the Cornell crew broke previous records, world records. In the New York Weekly Sports Section, this breaking of world records is attributed to, "This steady, impressive stroke of Phil Gravink, Clymer, New York, USA."

And so through all articles from newspapers, magazines, regatta programs, we cannot help but feel proud and happy that Phil Gravink is a Western New Yorker, a Clymerite. We welcome him back from his international athletic competition and with many others say, "Well Done" and God Bless You".