

HISTORY OF ISAAC

Isaac Litton High School opened its doors for the first time in October, 1930 to 176 students, all of whom were freshmen, sophomores and juniors. There were no seniors the first year. Therefore the graduating class of 58 seniors in 1932 was the first of forty graduating classes who very proudly received diplomas from Litton.

Among the many who have received their secondary education at Litton are a number of outstanding notables in their fields. Many have gone on in life to distinguish themselves in various ways and endeavors. Litton can claim as alumni men and women in all walks of life, such as educators, doctors, lawyers, politicians, athletics, business world, the entertainment world, the armed forces, and home-makers.

Mr. James Dean Brandon was the first principal at Isaac Litton. He was loved and appreciated for having undertaken a difficult job as principal at a new school with the many problems involved. Mr. G. C. Carney succeeded Mr. Brandon in 1933. He served the school long and well- a friend and counselor to all. Known to most as "Prof" Carney, he guided the school until 1944 when Mr. Joe Kidd Brown assumed the responsibilities as principal. Mr. Brown was also loved and admired; he had an uncanny talent for remembering his students- he could always call each student by name—an unbelievable feat since there were always at least 650 students enrolled while he was principal. When Mr. Brown left in 1950, Mr. Marshall Foster, who was already well known as the football and basketball coach, was chosen as the man to further guide the Litton student body. Mr. Foster remained at Litton until 1965.

Among those who were on the first faculty were several who spent many long and productive years at Litton. No history of the school would be complete without mentioning them. Mrs. Mary Katherine Clark, Mr. Otto Prater, Mr. J. E. Malone, Miss Mary Virginia King (later to become Mrs. Harvey Gee) Mrs. Burt Francis, Mr. Julian Crocker, Mrs. J. E. Moss. In later years other outstanding teachers were added that helped to make Litton the great school it was. Miss Jennie Mae McQuiddy, Miss Eleanor Brown, Mr. Gordon Lovell, Miss Mary Walker, Miss Helen Bramwell, Miss Lillian Paul (later became Mrs. Lillian Long), Miss Ruby Bateman, Mrs. J. D. Crocker, Miss Callie Lillie Owen, Miss Mary Frances Spurlock, Miss Frances Rice, Miss Mary Neil Moss, Mrs. G. E. Combs, Mr. Robert Maxwell and Mr. Sammy Swor. Naturally a great number of teachers not mentioned here have taught and contributed to the tradition that is Litton.

Always a popular figure in the office at Litton has been the secretary to the principal. Although not a member of the faculty, she was a friend, counselor, helper and one to whom you could always take your troubles and know you would be heard and helped if possible. Mrs. J. E. Malone was the first to serve. The first full time secretary, however, was Mrs. Jean Spotswood (later to become Mrs. Jean Buchanan). A graduate of Litton herself, she was near and dear to all students while secretary. Succeeding her in this capacity was Justine Perry (later to become Mrs. Harold Duke). She was a great friend and mother-confessor to the students and delighted in playing Cupid. Mrs. Bess Wright was the next to fill this position as secretary.

Student government was introduced in Isaac Litton High School by Prof. Carney in 1933. The purpose of student government was to cooperate in the government of the school, teach citizenship through practice and to develop self-discipline and social responsibility in the students. The school has been governed in this manner since. Every year a president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer are elected to serve the next year.

In the realm of athletics Isaac Litton has forged a great and honorable name. The Lions who wore the Red and Blue of Litton built a tradition of spirit and pride unequalled. They were not always champions in the won and lost column but were genuine champions to all their fellow students.

Mr. James Brandon was the first football coach, ably assisted by Mr. Julian Crocker. With a record of 5 wins 2 losses 1 tie, the team started a winning tradition that would distinguish Litton for years to come. The next year Mr. Crocker took the reins as football coach and held this position until 1940 when Mr. James Hamblen was named head coach. During these years Mr. Crocker had several assistants from time to time; namely, Mr. Carroll Tallent, Mr. Granville Waggoner (a former Litton student), and Mr. James Hamblen. During the years that the Red and Blue competed in varsity football, they have always distinguished themselves; perhaps not victorious in every game but always giving their best and displaying the spirit that has made Litton widely known. Among the fine coaches on the gridiron since Mr. Hamblen were Mr. Charles Miller (a Litton grad), Mr. Carl Yates, Mr. Charles Rounds, Mr. Marshall Foster, Mr. Bob Cummings, Mr. John Witt, Mr. Bill Harris, and Mrs. Richard Hewitt.

Perhaps one of the best teams Litton ever fielded on the gridiron was the undefeated team of 1940-41. Having completed the regular season unbeaten, they were declared City Champions. Then they journeyed to Murfreesboro to play Fayetteville in the Mid-State Tournament. In one of the most exciting games Litton has ever played, the Lions finally in sudden death playoff were winners. As a result of this victory the Litton team played Gallatin at Dudley Field and in a heartbreaking game, lost. Leonard Staggs and Bob Bingham were chosen on the All-City team and Staggs was voted the most valuable player award in the NIL.

Then there was the exciting team of 1947-48 who roared to a 8 won, 1 lost, 1 tie season and then defeated powerful MBA in a post-season game at Dudley Field. Thus they were awarded the trophy as champions of the Nashville Interscholastic League. Kenneth Duke was named on the Banner's All-City team; along with Tommy Patton, he was also chosen on the Tennessean and Good News All-City teams. Kenneth brought further glory to his school and himself as he was chosen the Most Valuable Player in the NIL and was named to the prestigious All-State squad.

When the 1948-49 season ended, again the Litton Lions had an outstanding record with only one loss against them. This was a heartbreaker as the Big Red from MBA emerged victorious over The Big Blue by a single point 20-19. Several members of the Litton team received special honors. Tommy Patton, Buford Partee, and Kenneth Duke were selected on the All-City team and James Presley was voted the Most Valuable Player in the NIL.

No one can forget the great team of 1951! Coach Bob Cumming's Lion eleven won the AA Division crown with only one league defeat. However the climax of the season came when the Litton Lions solidly trounced a good MBA team 39-27. A dream come true for any Litton football team! All of the Litton team that year were good but among the standouts were Claude Sharp and Willie Castleman, who were All-City selections; also Tommy Weiss, Billy King, Ralph Sellers, and Clarence Carter.

"A season of superlatives" could well describe the great 1952 football season as the Litton Lions roared to the greatest football year in the long illustrious history of the school. They ended season's play with a record of 9 wins and 1 defeat—the lone loss being to the top ranked team in the state. The Lions were the proud champions of the NIL AA Division. Then the Big Blue went across town to Dudley Field on Thanksgiving Day and defeated Ryan in the Clinic Bowl. A fitting climax to a tremendous football season. Meriting positions on various All-Star teams were George Volkert (the first player in the history of Nashville high school football to be named on the national All-American team), John Gordy, who went on to become an outstanding player with UT and the Detroit Lions, L. F. McClellan, Gray Potter, Rip Nix and Jerry Kemp.

Not to be outdone the 1953 edition of the Lions had a tremendous season also. Going into the first game with a young team, the charges of Bob Cummings again began to roar and completed the regular season with a 9 won 1 loss record. Again the Big Blue were declared NIL AA Division Champions and for the second year in a row were invited to play in The Clinic Bowl. Billy Kee and Tarzan Adams were among the stars of this team.

As the 1954 football season rolled around the Litton Lions had a big name to live up to as the two previous squads had gone to the Clinic Bowl. Well history repeated itself as this team was again crowned AA Division Champs and were headed to the Clinic Bowl for the third time in as many years. Four of the boys were named All-City; they were, Bobby Jones, Lyell Hunter, Rudolph Schmittou and Bill Ward, who also was selected on the All-State squad.

The NIL Championship was again awarded to the Big Blue in 1955. The Clinic Bowl climaxed the season again- this for the fourth straight year. The only loss of this season was to MBA in this post season game. Johnny Moore was named to the prestigious All-State team and Bobby Tillman, James McCullough, and Johnny Moore made All-Nashville. Steve Shaw was selected for the All-State football & basketball and was Banner player of the year in 1959.

In 1967 Litton won their last Championship, The AAA Eastern Division, and made the final appearance of the Big Blue of Isaac Litton High School in the Clinic Bowl at Vanderbilt's Dudley Stadium. Herbert and Harold Patterson, Bonnie Sloan, and Stuart Byrom were outstanding in their play throughout the season. As Fate would have it, this proved to be the last time the Lions could claim a championship in Nashville High School Football.

LITTON IN SPORTS

Laurels in athletics have also been garnered by Litton's basketball teams through the years. Among the coaches have been; Mr. J. E. (Molly) Malone, Mr. Carroll Tallent, Mr. Granville Waggoner, Mr. James Hamblen, Mr. Carl Yates, Mr. Charles Miller, Miss Ruby Bateman, Mr. Jess Carney, Mr. John Witt, Mr. Marshall Foster and Mrs. Mae Thompson.

One of the most illustrious and best basketball teams to wear the Red and Blue was the squad of 1938. They were winners of the Seventh District championship, runners-up to Central in the Regional Tournament and also competed in the State Tournament at Kingsport. Talent on this squad was abundant; Walter Wells made All-City, All-Regional, All-State; Jimmy Harris was All-City, Boonie Simmons was named to the All-Regional team, as was Grady Cornwell. Jimmy Jackson, Roscoe Jackson, and Paul Fudge were also among this talented group.

Again in 1939 the Litton Lions went to the State Tournament, only to be downed in the finals. Jimmy Jackson and Boonie Simmons were chosen on the All-District and All-Mid-State teams. Homer Dehoney was picked on the All-State squad.

During the years of the early forties the basketball boys brought many glories and honors to Litton High. In 1941 the team won the Seventh District Tournament, and also the Second Regional Tournament. They also traveled to Maryville to compete in the State Tournament. Among the many stars on this squad were Albert Dickerson, Ned Joyner, Harold Hite, Johnny Hite, Bubber Adwell, Grady Cornwell, Kirby Foster and Leonard Staggs. When the 1942 season rolled around Litton was blessed with experienced ball players. By the time the tournaments were over, the Lions had again won the Seventh District and were runners-up in the Second Unit Tournaments. Harold Hite made the All-District Team; both Harold and Johnny Hite were selected on the All-Tournament team and Calvin Emery was named the "best long distance shooter". Not to be outdone the boys representing the Red and Blue in 1943 also won the Seventh District championship and went to the Regional Tournament at Murfreesboro. Harold and Johnny Hite, Doug Clifton, Preacher Warren, and Enoch Thweatt made up this team.

Another championship and trophy was won in 1951 when the Lions won the Nineteenth District Championship. Among the stand-outs of this group were George Volkert, Clarence Carter, Jack Benz, Ralph Sellers and All-City Richard Elliott.

Then there was the "runners-up" team of 1955-56. They were runners-up in the District Tournament, Region V Tournament, and finally in the State Tournament. Ray Dickerson was chosen All-Nashville.

The girls basketball team has not been without their great and glorious years either. The very first team representing the Red and Blue won the Seventh District championship in 1932. Verna Mai Ellis who later became the coach at Litton was a standout. Also on the squad were Molly Hardy, Katherine Hardigg, Ann Cooper, and Lucille Bland. When the basketball season for 1933 was completed, again the Lionesses were Champions of the Seventh District. Ruth Benz, Jo Woodroof, Margaret Hickerson and Lily Crawley were members of this group, who were coached by Mr. Molly Malone. In 1943 the girls claimed the Seventh District championship and went to the Regional Tournament before being defeated. Among the stars of this team were Dorothy Sims, Rae Allessio, Eloise, Mumpower, Betty Pippin and Mary Ellen Allen.

Then in the season 1951-52 the Lionesses had one of the most successful seasons in school history. The Litton sextet wound up with a 17 won 2 lost record. That was good enough to gain a tie for the Nashville Interscholastic League championship. Catherine Burrus, Glenda Compton, Wendle Englert, Margie Johnston, Ann Hagewood, Earline, and Barbara Climer were the backbone of this fine squad.

Perhaps the finest hour for the Litton girls basketball team came in 1957-58 season. With three All-District, All-City and All-Regional girls on the squad, the Lionesses were winners of the Region V Championship and then went to the State Tournament before they were defeated in the finals. Gayle Brumbach was chosen Region V Most Valuable. Besides this honor she, along with Mary Wherry and Judy Jennings, were selected for the All-City and All-Regional teams.

Although football and basketball have dominated the sport scene at Litton throughout most of the history of the school, in latter years other sports have brought much publicity and many honors to the school. Among them are track, baseball, golf and tennis. Perhaps the most outstanding achievements have been in track. In 1965 Lions track team won the District Championship with Bobby Petty and Jerry Ballou earning the right to compete in the State Track meet. But the next year 1966 was the big year as the thinclads from Litton were State Champions! They were also the winners of the Banner Relays. This outstanding team broke 28 records and tied one during the season. Among the more notables competing for the Red and Blue were; Jerry Ballou, Herbert Patterson, Harold Paterson, Bonnie Sloan, Bobby Petty, and Dwain Kirby.

In golf Litton has had her champions too. In 1964 the linksmen won the NIL Championship with Jimmy Smith leading the way. Sam Young was the winner of the Individual Championship Golfer in the NIL in 1969.

The baseball team of 1953 provided a winner for The Red and Blue also. With such players as Joe Ray, Larry Tillman, Tarzan Adams, Bobby Sellers and Sonny Knox, the Lions were proclaimed the captors of the Nashville Interscholastic League crown. Mention must be made of Bobby Tillman also in this sport. Although he didn't play on a nine at Litton that won a championship, he went on to play in the major leagues. Thus he became one of the more well-known Litton grads.

Mention has not been made here of all the many many honors and glories brought to Isaac Litton in the field of sports during the forty year history of the school. Neither have all the coaches and assistant coaches been named; rather a brief history of the most outstanding has been presented.

A big part of life at Litton were the various and sundry clubs. Mention of all can not be made here. However there were some that were so integral a part of the School that they must not be omitted from the history of Isaac Litton. The "L" Club was organized in January 1931 and all students who had earned a letter in any athletic were eligible for membership. There have been many proud lettermen who wore the Red and Blue who were members of this selected group. This club was always sponsored by the coaches.

Another club that was organized in 1931 was the Debating Club, founded by Mr. Prater. Mr. Prater served Litton long and well, not only in this capacity but as math teacher. Litton has produced some very outstanding and capable debaters who have distinguished themselves. The following are some of the most outstanding: Bobby King, Stuart Swaggerty, Floyd Whitlow, Howard Allen, Elmer Alley, George Anderson, Bob Harvey, Edwin Macuch, Myron Haradon, Jack Irvin, Bill Wells, Johnny Lawrence, Jim Worley, Adolph Hill, Jane Dabney, Beverly McRae, Helen Grizzard, H. G. Bland, Jim Bateman, Patsy Young, Robert Hamlin, Beverly Corregano, and many others.

The Forensic Club has brought many honors to Litton also. The Debating and Forensic Club were combined during the 1938-39 year. Members of this club won the Davidson County Cup in 1938 and again in 1939. Among those representing the school in this endeavor were Howard Allen, Elmer Alley, George Anderson and Mozelle Adams. At the combining of the two clubs Miss Jennie Mai McQuiddy was also added as sponsor along with Mr. Prater. Miss Jennie Mai was a great inspiration, as well as an outstanding teacher in the many phases of forensics.

Other clubs which have helped to make Litton a fulfilling experience through the years are the Hi-Y Club, Dramatic Club, Home Ec, Science Club, Girl Reserves, Glee Club, Future Homemakers, Journalism Club, Photography, and Y-Teens. These are by no means all the clubs which have made school days more interesting but these are perhaps the oldest in existence at Litton.

Delta Tau Phi, a chapter of the National Honor Society, was organized in the spring of 1932. A charter was applied for and was granted in a later year. To be eligible a student had to attain an average of 90 or above for two consecutive years, and had to show excellence in these four qualities; scholarship, character, leadership, and service. The first sponsor was Miss Betty Whitlock. Then Miss Mary Walker succeeded her and served this group of scholars until she was forced to retire because of illness in 1962. Miss Walker began her teaching career at Litton in 1932 and was an inspiration and guiding force to many Litton students during her long years of service.

An annual publication called the LITTONIAN has been produced every year since the first year 1932. It gives more or less a pictorial history of events of the school year. Mr. Malone and Mrs. Harvey Gee were the patient and ever helpful teachers that sponsored the annual.

Then the next year saw the birth of Isaac Litton's second publication better known as the LITTON BLAST. Mrs. Harvey Gee was the "mother" of this newspaper. The name BLAST was suggested by one of the Litton students when a contest was held to select a name. The paper at first was a little mimeographed publication and was put out about every three weeks; but by 1940 it had graduated into a printed newspaper published monthly. Under the guidance and patient help of Mrs. Gee, the BLAST has won many awards in the Tennessee High School Press Association and also the Southern Interscholastic Press Association.