

## HISTORY of the ISAAC LITTON HIGH SCHOOL BAND

In 1937, Miss Vergie Lee Taylor (Mrs. Wesley Seatt) organized the band around an already organized school orchestra. The band was given hearty support by local business and the Parent-Teachers Association. The first band was made up of some sixty-five high school and grammar school students. Miss Taylor was director for almost two years but the last three months were completed by Miss Margaret Johnson (Mrs. Neil Wright).

In 1939, the band came under the direction of John B. Dodge. The Isaac Litton Band Parents Association was formed and uniforms were obtained. In this year, the band was organized completely of high school students. It attended the annual festival, won high honors and was voted unanimously the best-dressed band in the state. Donald Apple had the distinction of being the first drum major.

In 1942 the band was placed in the hands of Wallace McMurray. In 1943 and 1944 the band was under the direction of Charles H. Hill. The year 1945 saw the band under the direction of John Sneed Jones. It entered the festival that year and received a superior rating in marching and an excellent rating in concert. The band also participated in Tennessee's Sesqui-Centennial Celebration.



In 1946 Charles H. Hill returned as director. The band held its first annual concert which was a great success. That year it attended the annual festival at Columbia, marched in the parade there, and received the honor of being the best marching, best looking and best dressed band in the parade. The band received the degree of superior in concert and excellent in marching. In 1947, the band went to Louisville with the football team. Subsequently, Mr. Hill became ill

and Joe McEwen substituted during his absence. Mr. Hill returned immediately but re-entered the hospital which left the band without a director for about three weeks; however, on March 31, 1948 William F. Swor came to its rescue.



Marching 100+ Concert Formation circa 1959

In the fall of 1948 the band came under the capable and enthusiastic leadership of Sammy V. Swor. In 1951 the band parents re-organized and formed the Isaac Litton Band Boosters Club. Band court was held for the first time in 1953 and Dolores Gay was the first band queen and Tommy Sanborn was the first band king. In January 1954, Janice Hamrick won the “Name the Band Contest” for submitting the name of “The Marching One Hundred.”



Band Director Sammy Swor

During 1962 and 1963, the Band Boosters Club raised \$11,000 for the purchase of 150 new red, white, and blue uniforms which were received on March 7, 1963. The Majorette Corps won the national championship in the World Twirling Association Contest in Topeka Kansas in 1962. The Color Guard won the state championship in the American Legion Color Guard Contest in Memphis in 1963. During the ensuing years “The Marching One Hundred Plus” gained nationwide prominence for its spirited Spanish music and marching shows and was invited to appear at events from coast to coast and border to border, including numerous appearances on network television. Prominent activities during this period included the Cotton Carnival in Memphis in 1963, inauguration of Mayor Beverly Briley on April 1, 1963, representing the State of Tennessee at the International Lions Convention and Parade in Miami Beach, Florida in June 1963; Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California on January 1, 1964, when it was one of five bands selected outside the State of California; Macy’s Christmas Parade down Broadway in New York City on Thanksgiving Day of 1964; the half-time shows for pro-football games between the Chicago Bears and Los Angeles Rams exhibition game in 1963, the Baltimore Colts and Green Bay Packers at Baltimore in 1963, the New York Giants and Atlanta Falcons at Nashville in 1966, the Washington Redskins and New York Giants at Washington in 1966, the New York Giants and Cleveland Browns at Yankee Stadium in New York in 1967 and the New York Giants and Atlanta Falcons at Nashville in 1968.



Upon the band’s return from the Tournament of roses Parade in 1964, Mayor Beverly Briley presented Mr. Swor with the keys to a 1964 station wagon which was a gift from the band parents, students and other friends.

After nineteen years as director of the band, Mr. Swor accepted a position as Supervisor of Instrumental Music for the Metropolitan School System. He was presented a new station wagon from all of his friends in the Inglewood community during the New York Giants- Atlanta Falcons halftime at Dudley Field on August 17, 1968. Dr. Cleo Miller made the presentation after Mr. Swor led the band for the final time.

When school began in September 1968 the band was under the direction of well-known musician, James J. Doster.

Then in the fall of 1969, the band came under the baton of John T Wade. During his leadership the band participated in the Atlanta Dogwood Festival Parade in April 1970 and the American Legion National Convention Parade in Houston Texas in August 1971.

The band received twenty consecutive "A" ratings in marching festivals and more than sixty-five trophies in marching contests, festivals and parades.

A collection of four CDs containing all the music the Marching 100 is so remembered for is available from the Store section of this website.

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