

Arrow Nation: A history of Clinton High School football

By Abigail Walker

Last year's state championship win marked the dawn of a new era for Clinton Arrows football, and, thanks to Arrows fan and Clinton resident Delvan Irwin, there is now a book that celebrates the journey. From origin to championship, *Arrow Nation: Clinton High School Football 1920 to 2016* is the ultimate history of Clinton football that showcases those who have helped build the Arrow legacy to what it is today.

Arrow Nation is a chronological history of Clinton football that covers a total of 933 games throughout the years, along with game scores, summaries, and even quotes from past players or coaches from as far back as the 1940s. The book includes an index that lists every known Clinton football player and the years they played, as well as homecoming queens and cheerleaders.

"There are 2,600 people mentioned by name in the book," Irwin says. "I really tried to make it something the community would enjoy."

Irwin and his family have lived in Clinton since 2000.

"My son played at Clinton, my daughter cheered there, and I was on the Board," Irwin says. "My son's

last year was 2015, but, since Clinton won the championship in 2016, it seemed like a good place to stop."

The book, which required extensive research, took Irwin a little over a year to put together. Irwin spent hours sifting through newspaper microfilms at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for game records. He also used articles from *The Clinton News*, *The Clinton Courier*, and *The Clarion Ledger*, as well as yearbooks from Clinton High School and the Quisenberry Library.

But the history wasn't always straightforward. Irwin had to search through newspapers from the towns that Clinton had played over the years to help fill in the gaps.

"Sometimes it took scouring the social section to find out that someone went to a Clinton game and that we won," Irwin says. "It's like a big puzzle."

Irwin says the human interest part of the research was what he enjoyed the most—putting a story behind a name.

"You read everything about a past team, so when you are done writing about a year, you feel like you know those players," he says. "You feel like you've watched them play or that you're a part of the team."

Past Clinton football players helped

provide game details Irwin would never have known about, and, thanks to their information, he was able to include players of the week and end of the year awards.

"This is a fraternity," says Irwin. "I think the people who paved the way for what the program is today should have just as much recognition as the ones who held the trophy last year."

Danny Davis, who wrote the forward for *Arrow Nation*, was also a vital source. Irwin says, "If it weren't for Danny, we would not have the details that we do in the book."

Davis moved to Clinton in 1976 and has been involved with Clinton football for over forty years. From being the "voice" of the Clinton Arrows games to writing articles about the team for *The Clinton Courier*, Davis

bleeds black and red.

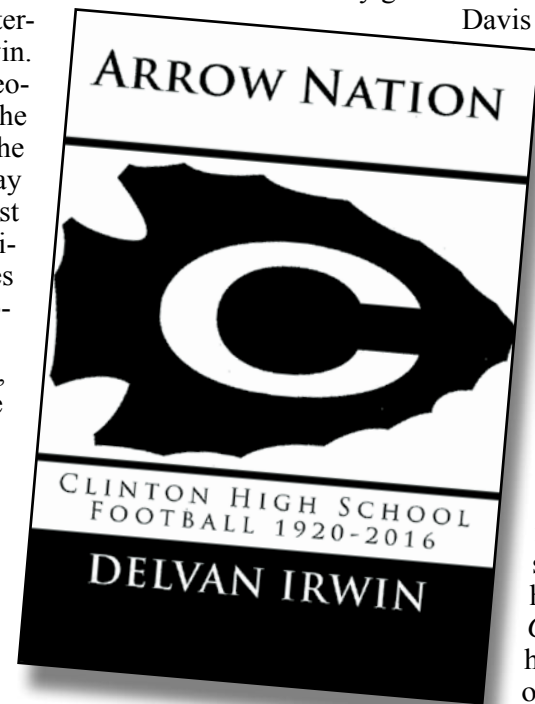
"I've only missed two home games since 1980," Davis says. "And I've been to about ninety percent of the away games."

Davis provided Irwin with all the articles he's written about the Arrows since 1976, as well as game programs and photos. Irwin says it would have taken much longer to complete the book without Davis' help.

"I'm a history buff myself," says Davis. When he wrote for *The Clinton News*, he would dig up old sports articles for "Arrow Flash-

backs." Davis says high school football is a "passion" for him, and he's excited that there is now a book celebrating a team he's proud to call his own.

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You, your staff, her teachers, are all such a positive influence in her life. I thank God daily for CCA and we are so happy knowing Eliza is thriving in such a warm, loving, structured, Christian environment.

Thank you,
Melanie Naquin
Mother of Eliza Naquin