

**BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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*The following story was submitted by Mark Mullinax who recently retired as the Genealogy and Local History Librarian at the Brighton District Library.*

**GO BULLDOGS!**

Have you ever wondered how Brighton High School became known as the Bulldogs? A couple of theories exist. In the excellent history of Brighton entitled "From Settlement to City, Brighton, Michigan, 1832-1945" by Carol McMacken she notes on page 304 that a track team was started at the high school in 1925. "About that same time a film was playing at the Rialto called Bull Dog Courage. It may be a coincidence that the school later adopted the name the Brighton Bull Dogs."

The Brighton High School yearbooks for 1930 and 1931 make no mention of a mascot or moniker for any of the athletic teams.

It wasn't until the February 3, 1937 issue of the Brighton Argus that the first mention of the Bulldogs appears. An article begins:

*"The Brighton Bulldogs snapped out of their losing streak Tuesday evening on their own floor with a 35-11 victory over Dexter."*

*"It started with (Carl) Bidwell making 4 baskets and (William) Richmond another as Dexter was kept in a daze. Coach Bulla took out Bidwell after the first quarter..."*

The Coach Bulla mentioned in the article was Ralph Bulla who, in addition to being the coach of the boy's basketball and football teams, was also the math teacher. He was only at Brighton High for the 1935-36 and 1936-37 school years. By all reports, he was an excellent coach and at the Fall Football Banquet at the conclusion of the 1936 season Coach Bulla was given "words of appreciation" by the Brighton Business Men's Associ-

ation for having produced such a splendid team. It's highly probable that by then the sports teams were being referred to as "Bulla's Dogs" which was soon shortened to "Bulldogs."

The February 2, 1938 issue of the Brighton Argus informs us the "the fighting Bull Dogs (sic) of Brighton High defeated the second team of Fowlerville 26-20 in our gym Tuesday night." Another article on September 28, 1938 heralding the 29-0 "trouncing" of Howell High's football team by Brighton's team declares that "the Brighton Bulldogs presented an impressive picture as they came on the field with their new uniforms and helmets to match."

The 1938 BHS yearbook marks the first time an image of a bulldog was produced. It was superimposed over every sports page of the yearbook. This action seems to have cemented the Bulldog as the official mascot of Brighton High School. Regardless of which version of the Bulldog origination is correct; its legacy endures to this day. GO BULLDOGS!!!

*(Mark Mullinax is a member of the BAHS and we would like to thank him for sending along this story and wish him well in his retirement.)*

