

ET TU, BRUTUS? THE SPIRIT OF BATAVIA

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Batavia's famous bulldog first appeared in the mid-1940s, but Batavia High School had other nicknames as early as 1932.

Long before Batavia's athletic teams were called the Bulldogs, they were the Vikings. (Yes: It's true!) Perhaps the name was inspired by the Independent Order of Vikings, active in Batavia since 1904, or the predominance of boys of Swedish descent on the football field and basketball court.

The Vikings name was prevalent in the Batavia Herald and Geneva Republican beginning with the 1932–1933 school year. In a special edition of the East High Auroran (9 March 1933), which served as a program for the district basketball tournament, Batavia was the only team with a nickname: Vikings.

The Vikings name appeared less frequently after Batavia dropped football in 1934 (for three seasons) and, by the late 1930s, the Batavia Herald regularly referred to the team as the Crimson—occasionally in combination with other monikers, such as Crimson tide and Crimson tigers.

We can only speculate why the Vikings name fell out of favor. Alvin W. Sager, a 1937 Batavia graduate, suggested two possible reasons: East Siders—mostly not Swedish—probably disliked the name, and the lack of a yearbook, 1918–1944, probably hurt the cause.

Why Bulldogs? Paul W. “Peeler” Bergeson, Jr., a 1945 Batavia graduate—as well as football captain and class president—noted that Coach Howard J. Lester (1944–1948) had arrived in Batavia and desired a nickname. The Vikings name had fallen into disuse and was picked up by Geneva (circa 1942–1943). Peeler recalled that the Bulldogs name was chosen by a student vote, though no records survive.

The first known reference to “Batavia bulldogs” occurred in the Batavia Herald on 16 February 1945; the name appeared for the first time in the 1946 Echo (for the 1945–1946 school year).

In November 1967, the bulldog was officially named Brutus in a contest won by Diane Schroeder, then a junior at Batavia High School.



Basketball Tournament
EAST HIGH AUROAN

BATAVIA HIGH SCHOOL
Front Row (left to right)—Hall, Gould, Miner, Johnson, Anderson.
Second Row (left to right)—Anderson, Nelson, Roesler, Hunt, Morton.
Nickname of School—Windmill City High.
Nickname of Basketball Team—Vikings.
School Colors—Crimson and Gold.

Coach—J. G. Sykora, graduate of University of Illinois, and has had five year's of coaching experience.

Player's Name	No.	Position	Age	Height	Weight	Class
Roesler	9	C.	17	6-2	165	Junior
Hunt	11	G.	17	5-10	148	Junior
Johnson	3	F.	17	5-9	140	Soph.
Hazelwood	4	F.	17	5-9	150	Senior
Morton	6	G.	16	5-11	148	Soph.
Anderson	5	F.	16	5-10	140	Junior
Nelson	10	G.	18	6-1	165	Senior
Gould	8	G.	18	6	168	Junior
Peterson	13	C.	15	5-11	148	Fresh.
Miner	12	F.	19	5-10	148	Senior
Anderson	14	G.	18	6	152	Senior
Hall	15	G.	16	5-9	142	Soph.

Season's record in regular scheduled games: Won, 9; Lost, 8.
Remarks: Runner-up of District Tournament in 1932.